



REMOVE ALL DUPLICATE FILES

WebUser

Issue 359

GREAT
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VALUE

3 - 16 December 2014

• Best software • New apps • Expert tips

Wipe junk videos,
music, photos &
documents **p64**

RECORD ALL VIDEO & RADIO

FROM THE WEB

- ✓ Your favourite BBC shows
- ✓ Any song from any site
- ✓ Rip live streams
- ✓ Record what you can't download
- ✓ Play anything offline
- ✓ Record to keep

...and much more! Page 38

*Don't miss any
TV or radio
this Christmas!*



PLUS

**Lock your PC using
a USB stick** **p54**

It's faster and safer than passwords

**Add Wi-Fi to devices
that don't have it**

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Re-record not fade away

Remember the heart-stopping leap for the tape machine when it started chewing up a beloved audio cassette? Sure, you could straighten the mangled tape and spool it back in with a pencil, but if the cassette contained recordings from the radio of seldom-broadcast songs (rather than, say, Duran Duran hits), you'd be too scared to risk playing it again. Thankfully, life is much easier in the digital era and MP3 files almost never 'chew up'. Indeed, the trickiest part is making the recording in the first place.

In this issue's cover feature (page 40), we reveal the secrets of capturing live radio

and video streams from the web, so you can play them at your convenience. So long as you keep your recordings for personal use rather than selling them at car-boot sales, you can enjoy them forever.

One thing you certainly don't want is multiple versions of the same thing, so on page 64 we explain how to remove annoying duplicates from your PC, to clear some space in time for Christmas!

Robert Irvine
robert_irvine@dennis.co.uk
[#webuser](#)



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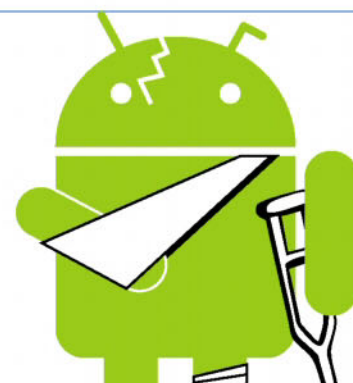
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What's New Online

Share Kindle ebooks with your family

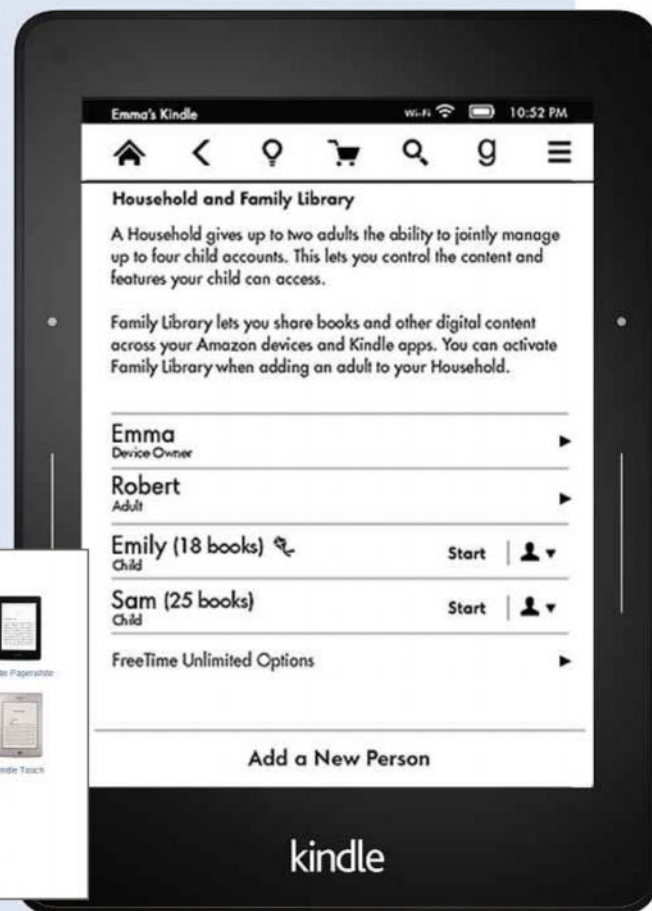
Amazon has released a substantial update to its software for Kindle e-readers, the most significant being the Family Library feature, which has been available on the Fire phone and tablets since October. It lets you share ebooks across devices with other people in a 'virtual household', which comprises two adults – each with their own Amazon account – and up to four children. Also new is Word Wise, which shows definitions and synonyms above difficult words.

Other new tools include a timeline view in the 'X-Ray for Books', which makes it easier to browse the most notable passages in a particular book, and an improved search facility, which shows preview results from your Library and the Kindle Store on the same page.

The automatic software update was announced on 16 November and

should, by now, have arrived on your Kindle. If not, you can download the software from the link below on Amazon's 'Fire and Kindle Software Updates' page. It also shows you which Kindle devices are compatible with the update (see screengrab, below).

bit.ly/kindle359



Share Google Keep notes in real time

bit.ly/keep359

Google has updated its excellent Keep app to let you share and collaborate on notes with other people in real time, providing a great alternative to text messaging. One way to use this, as Google suggests on the official Android blog (bit.ly/andblog359), is to cross items off a shopping list as they are bought – or add new ones as they come to mind. Google has also made searching for notes easier by letting you filter them using several criteria, the most useful of which is colour. By making all your shopping notes green, for example, you'll be able to find them more quickly.



Quickly unfollow people on Facebook

bit.ly/face359

Facebook has changed its News Feed settings to make it easier for you to 'unfollow' tedious

people, Pages and Groups, which means you'll stop seeing their posts. You can

now see how often they have 'contributed' to Facebook over the past week, helping you decide whether they are worth following. You can also see who you've unfollowed in the past and can choose to re-follow them at anytime.

On your News Feed page, hover over 'News Feed' at the top-left until a cog appears. Click the cog, then 'Edit settings' (see screengrab), and you'll see people, Pages and Groups that have appeared most in your Feed over the past week. To unfollow someone, click the 'Following' button. Click the link above to read Facebook's blog post explaining the changes.



We highlight 10 of the most amazing and amusing things you can do on the web this fortnight

Explore the Great Barrier Reef

bit.ly/reef359

You can see sharks, whales, sea turtles, seahorses and dolphins in Google's new collection of underwater Street View images, all shot off the Australian coast. Divers from the Catlin Seaview Survey took the photographs in Sydney Harbour, at Bondi Beach and along the Great Barrier Reef. Click the above link to go to Google's official Australia blog,



where you'll find shortcuts to the images, as well as photos of 21 national parks in New South Wales.

Browse data maps of London

bit.ly/maps359

In their brilliant new book *London: The Information Capital* (£11 on Amazon: bit.ly/book359), geographer Dr James Cheshire and visual designer Oliver Uberti capture our capital city in 100 maps and infographics (or 'data portraits'). The BBC has put the best ones online, including this dazzling illustration of daily commutes into London. There are also images depicting London's ethnicity, the rocketing price of renting and the popularity of football clubs on Twitter.



Make Skype calls via your browser



bit.ly/skypeblog359

After adding Skype to Outlook.com in early 2013, Microsoft has now released the Skype for Web beta web app, which lets you use the call service from within Internet Explorer, Chrome, Firefox and Safari, simply by pressing a 'call' button.

However, only people who receive an invite can use it at the moment. Skype says these will be sent "to a small number of existing and new users", but the app will be made available to everyone "in the coming months". Sign in at skype.com to see if you have an invite.

5 TO FOLLOW ON TWITTER



[@MeetAnimals](https://twitter.com/MeetAnimals)

Cute photos of baby jaguars, sleeping kittens, loved-up giraffes and more from Animal Planet

[@financialombuds](https://twitter.com/financialombuds)

Answers on money matters from the financial ombudsman

[@EbolaAlert](https://twitter.com/EbolaAlert)

Updates on attempts to limit the spread of the disease

[@virgingalactic](https://twitter.com/virgingalactic)

Discover what happens to Virgin's plans for commercial spaceflight following last month's fatal crash

[@GylesB1](https://twitter.com/GylesB1)

Witty thoughts and good-natured chat from prolific tweeter Gyles Brandreth



Store unlimited photos with Amazon Prime

bit.ly/photos359

All Amazon Prime members now get unlimited photo storage on the company's Cloud Drive. Previously, it was only available to subscribers who had a Fire tablet or phone.

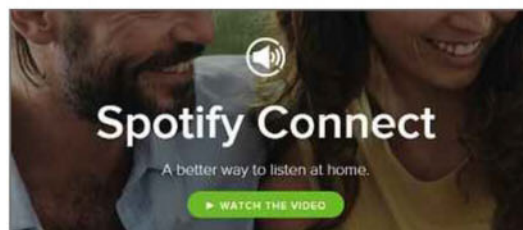
Watch the new *Ripper Street*

Also available to Amazon Prime members, the third series of *Ripper Street* is being streamed on Prime's Instant Video service. Amazon bought the show after the BBC cancelled it last year. An Instant Video subscription is £5.99 a month.

Control Spotify on your PC from your phone

www.spotify.com/connect

If you subscribe to Spotify's Premium (£9.99 a month) service, you can now use the Connect feature to control the music being played on your PC from your phone or tablet (iOS or Android). To make it work, log into Spotify on your device, play a song, tap



the Now Playing bar, then tap the Connect icon and select your computer from the list that appears.

Get free Wi-Fi through Virgin Mobile

www.thecloud.net

Virgin Mobile customers can now access more than 22,000 free UK hotspots provided by The Cloud. Whenever you're in range, Virgin's WiFi Buddy app will automatically connect to the hotspot without you needing to sign in.

Russian website spies on UK homes via webcams

What happened?

Privacy fears were raised over a Russian website that streams webcam footage from thousands of homes and businesses around the world, including the UK.

The site exploits webcams that have been set up to be accessed remotely, for example as a security measure to view footage of your home over the internet while you're away. Hackers have managed to gain access to these webcams because they are not properly secured and still use the default passwords.

The Russian site, called Insecam, scans the web for connected devices and tries default login credentials for thousands of makes of camera, including CCTV security cameras and baby monitors. If successful, it's able to access and share video streams of office workers, children playing in nurseries and even people asleep in bed.

The UK's data watchdog, the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO, www.ico.gov.uk), alerted the US Federal Trade Commission about the problem, to force Russia to take the site down. However, this was two months after the *Mail on Sunday* ran a story about the website on 20 September (bit.ly/webcam359). At the time of writing, all webcam streams appear to have been



removed from the site.

Information Commissioner Christopher Graham told the BBC that his office hadn't known about the *Mail on Sunday* article and only became aware of the website after colleagues in Australia and Canada alerted the watchdog. The ICO then issued its warning the following day.

"We only knew about it 24 hours ago," Graham told the *Guardian*. "This is a very obscure website, run by Russians, registered in an offshore territory administered by Australia." He pointed out that taking down the website doesn't protect users from other hackers, stressing that they need to change their default passwords and choose strong alternatives.

Graham said it was "spooky" that children were shown sleeping in their beds, but added that it was the parents' responsibility to set a new password for a baby monitor.

How will it affect you?

If you use a webcam for any purpose, you should change the password from the default. In fact, you should do this with any hardware you own because default passwords can easily be found using a simple online search.

If this privacy breach sounds extreme and rare, don't forget that it's happened

before: earlier this year, a hacker gained access to baby monitors in the US and used the built-in speakers to yell at children. Also, attackers have previously targeted webcams built into laptops to spy on users.

It's unclear exactly what the Russian site hopes to achieve, but some reports suggest it may be trying to highlight how poorly protected many web-connected devices are. As the so-called Internet of Things allows more and more home appliances to be online all the time, these problems will only

increase.

What do we think?

It's chilling to think that someone is spying on you, and also alarming that our own data watchdog does such a poor job of protecting us. We're surprised that the original report about the Russian website in such a high-profile national newspaper was missed by the ICO, and we hope that the watchdog pays closer attention to such stories in future so it can protect us from data breaches.

That said, the ICO has been slow to pick up on several privacy issues in the past: when Google's Street View cars were exposed for collecting Wi-Fi data as they photographed houses, the ICO waited until other countries' privacy officials had come to a decision before making its own. It's also failed to respond publicly to Edward Snowden's revelations about government surveillance, which is undoubtedly the biggest privacy story of the past year.

As more data is collected about us, and more of our devices are connected to the web, we need an effective and reliable data watchdog. Right now, the ICO simply isn't effective enough, and it's time for Christopher Graham and his office to step up or step aside and let another body tackle this tough job.



The ICO has issued a warning to change webcam passwords or risk being spied on

What we think of this fortnight's top tech stories and rumours

YouTube launches ad-free streaming

What happened?

Google is making a new attempt to earn money from music hosted on YouTube, by launching YouTube Music Key. For \$9.99 a month (which is likely to equate to £9.99 in the UK), this subscription-based streaming service will provide unlimited, ad-free videos and concert clips in your browser, as well as streaming songs to your mobile device via its app. You can also download tracks to listen to offline and get access to Google Play Music – which usually costs \$9.99 per month on its own. If you already subscribe to Google Play Music, you'll automatically get access to YouTube Music Key.

How will it affect you?

If you love YouTube but find the ads annoying, you'll probably want Music Key. It's a strong rival to the likes of Spotify, and is as easy to use as the standard YouTube website.

Music Key is currently in beta and US users can sign up for a six-month free

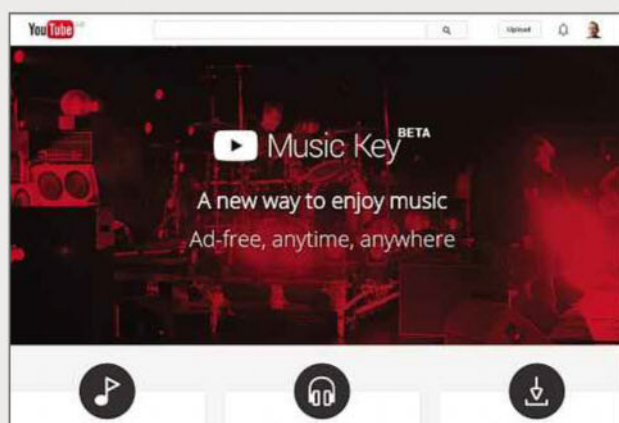
preview at www.youtube.com/musickey. Sadly, there's no confirmation whether or when Music Key will launch in the UK, presumably due to copyright issues that have to be ironed out.

What do we think?

There's no shortage of streaming services these days, but this is still big news. YouTube is already the most popular site for playing music and has provided instant access to millions of songs for years, well before Spotify arrived.

Spotify was recently criticised by musicians for the low royalties it pays artists: singer Taylor Swift pulled her catalogue and refused to allow her new album on the service, saying it devalues music. However, she's happy for her singles to remain on YouTube.

We think YouTube is still one of the best ways to discover (and rediscover) music, so Music Key will definitely be one to watch and listen to when it finally arrives on these shores.





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Twitter makes every tweet searchable

What happened?

Twitter performed a major upgrade to its search engine, making it possible to search for any tweet ever posted on the site. The Advanced Search page lets you search for specific phrases, users or hashtags within a set time frame, although deleted tweets disappear from the servers within 30 days. In a blog post, Twitter said it has entirely rebuilt the search engine to provide full access to its archive of half a trillion tweets.

How will it affect you?

You can now enjoy having every tweet ever posted at



your fingertips.

Twitter's search facility has long been a source of frustration, because although it was capable of finding recent tweets, searching for tweets from years or even months ago was likely to return a blank.

What do we think?

We're pleased that Twitter has finally improved its search engine, and it will be interesting to delve into tweets from the past to carry out research and explore the history of the web. Hopefully, the fact that all tweets will now be permanently accessible will make people think twice about posting offensive and thoughtless tweets.

Mozilla ditches Google and brings ads to Firefox

What happened?

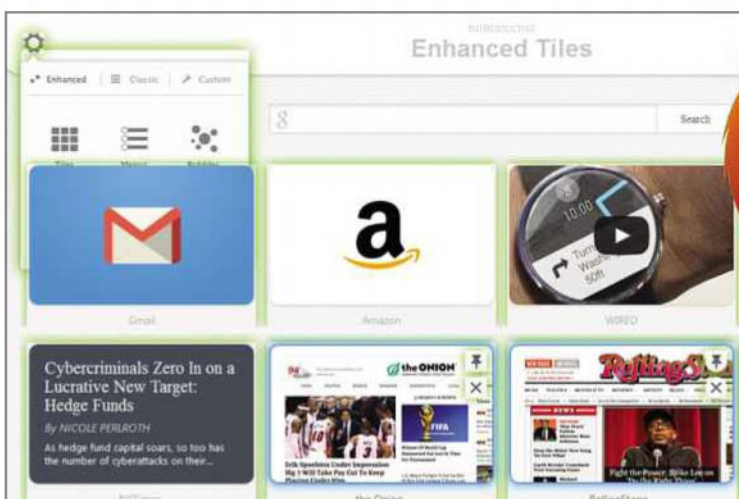
Mozilla, the company behind Firefox, has ended its decade-long search deal with Google. It's dropped the world's most popular search engine in favour of Yahoo as the default search tool in its browser – but only in the US.

The Google deal has been Mozilla's main source of funding: in 2012, Google paid \$280 million (£179 million) to be Firefox's default search engine, providing the bulk of Mozilla's \$311 million (£199 million) revenue for that year.

Mozilla will make up the money by displaying adverts on Firefox's New Tab page, in the tiles that previously showed your most visited websites. Mozilla has stressed that the ads won't be based on behavioural advertising, which uses information from your online activities, and which Firefox has long worked to protect users from.

How will it affect you?

Google will remain the default search engine for Firefox in the UK and the rest of Europe for the time being, but if it changes to Yahoo, you can easily switch



back to Google in Settings.

If you're not a fan of advertisements in Firefox, you can avoid them in two ways. At the moment, tools such as Adblock Plus (by far the most popular extension for the browser) won't filter the ads from tiles on the New Tab page, but Mozilla said it will work in future releases, so you'll see blank tiles instead of ads. Alternatively, you can manually turn off the ads by clicking the cog icon on the New Tab page and changing the setting from Enhanced to Classic.

If you'd rather not have either Google or Yahoo as your default search engine, Firefox has just added DuckDuckGo to its list of built-in choices (see our tip in



Best New Browser Tools on page 31).

What do we think?

Embedding ads in Firefox is a risky move for Mozilla because it was at the

forefront of the charge against advertisers using browsers to track web users. However, the company is left with little choice. Google started paying Mozilla to push Firefox users towards its search engine before it launched Chrome, but that browser now has more market share than Microsoft's Internet Explorer, while Firefox languishes in third place for Desktop browsers, according to the latest figures from StatCounter (gs.statcounter.com). Google simply doesn't need Firefox any more. But if you like the browser and appreciate having an open-source alternative to Microsoft and Google, the ads may seem a fair trade-off.

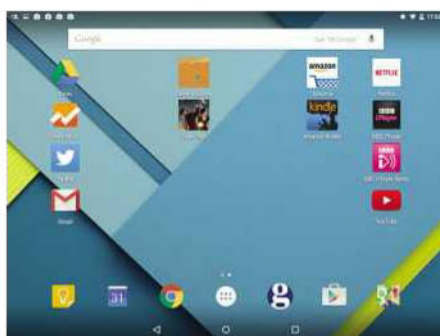


FIRST LOOK

Android 5.0

www.android.com/lollipop

Android 5.0, otherwise known as Android Lollipop, is the biggest update to Google's mobile operating system for several years. We tested it on Google's Nexus 9 and Nexus 5 to see how it performed on different screen sizes, and the first thing we noticed was its stunning new 'Material Design' which, like Apple's iOS 7, introduces flatter, simpler design elements as well as brighter, more colourful icons. Many of the operating system's more important features, such as the app tray and the notification menu, now use a white background (instead of the black menus seen in Android 4.4 KitKat). You'll also notice that the Back, Home and Multitasking soft keys at the



bottom of the screen have been simplified to a triangle, circle and square.

Aside from its improved appearance, Lollipop also introduces a variety of changes under the hood. For the first time, the operating system supports 64-bit chipsets (included in the Nexus 9), which means it has a higher memory limit than 4GB and apps will run faster. Android 5.0 also runs and compiles

code slightly differently, which should lead to improvements in performance and battery life. In fact, battery life has become something of a focus in the latest update, with Google aiming to make the operating system use less battery when performing basic tasks such as checking for updates and emails. The OS also offers more advanced tools for managing battery usage, including the new battery-saver mode, which throttles performance and restricts radio usage when your remaining power gets low.

We experienced a few teething problems with Android Lollipop, but we expect these to be fixed in future updates. Otherwise, we were really impressed with the OS and look forward to seeing how manufacturers such as Samsung, Sony and HTC adapt it for their devices.



WHAT'S THE RUMOUR

Is Virgin Media selling customers to TalkTalk?

Reports suggest that Virgin Media's 100,000 remaining ADSL customers will soon find themselves on the TalkTalk network. The transfer could potentially see the latter become the joint third most popular ISP in the UK, after BT and Sky. Virgin currently has 4.4 million broadband customers, while TalkTalk has 4.2 million, so the transfer of 100,000 customers will make them roughly equal.

Virgin originally offered ADSL to customers who weren't within reach of its cable network, but never really promoted the service or put much effort into building its ADSL customer base.

Now, the company appears to have decided that those 100,000 customers are surplus to requirements and has sold their connections to TalkTalk.

"We are pleased to have agreed this deal, which reflects the scale and quality of our network," said a spokesperson for TalkTalk. "We look forward to welcoming these customers to TalkTalk and will be working closely with Virgin Media to ensure the process goes as smoothly as possible. These customers will be able to benefit from our full range of great value products, including TV and mobile, and we aim to make all of them better off."



Virgin Media recently started to expand its cable-broadband network, after years of limited growth. Earlier this year, it announced it was connecting a further 100,000 homes in East London and last month said it was connecting another 5,000 homes in Glasgow.

LIKELIHOOD RATING



This already looks like a done deal, although it's important to note that Virgin's four million cable customers won't be affected by the sale. If you have been using Virgin's ADSL service, you're likely to be better off with TalkTalk, which at least specialises in that type of broadband rather than treating it as an afterthought.



WEBOMETER



WE LIKE...

↑ 4G upload rates much faster than 3G

According to new research by Ofcom, the average upload rate on 4G in the UK is 12.4Mbps compared to 1.6Mbps on 3G. EE (14.7Mbps) and O2 (13Mbps) had the fastest 4G upload rates, followed by Vodafone (11.5Mbps) and Three (11.1Mbps).



↑ New smartphone glass twice as durable

The next generation of Gorilla Glass, which is used in three billion devices worldwide, will be twice as durable as current displays, according to its manufacturer, Corning.



WE DON'T LIKE...

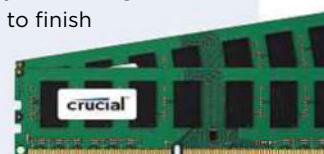
↓ Symantec discovers devious new spyware

Security firm Symantec has discovered a highly sophisticated virus capable of capturing screenshots, stealing passwords and recovering deleted files from a victim's computer. The malware, named Regin, is thought to have been developed by an as-yet unspecified nation state.



↓ Brits waste 2.1 billion hours a year on slow tech

The average Brit wastes over 39 hours each year waiting for slow technology to finish everyday tasks, according to new research by storage and memory experts Crucial (uk.crucial.com/gbr/en).



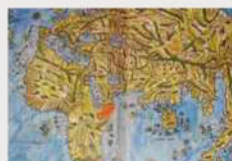
What's new on Kickstarter

Our favourite new project on the crowd-funding site

The World's Family Tree

bit.ly/family359 | From £3

This ambitious project plans to create a family tree of the whole world, which all web users can look at and contribute to. If it succeeds, you'll be able to discover how you're related to every other person on the globe, from a Saudi Arabian prince to a librarian in Swindon. The website will work by letting you add your family tree and getting your relations to expand it with people they know. Individual trees will then overlap, combine and eventually form one giant tree. The World's Family Tree is hoping to raise £18,000 by 16 December, so pledge now to be a part of history.



Stay Safe Online

News about the latest threats and advice from security experts

SECURITY ALERT! | What's been bothering us this fortnight

Man jailed for WhatsApp 'revenge porn'

21-year old Luke King has been jailed for 12 weeks after sharing explicit images of his former girlfriend via the messaging service WhatsApp. While individuals distributing revenge porn can now face up to two years in prison following the introduction of a new law, King was prosecuted under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997. He had been warned by officers not to post the images after his victim contacted the police to inform them that he had threatened to do so.

bit.ly/revengeporn359



OS X flaw gives hackers control of your Mac

A flaw discovered by security researcher Emil Kvarnhammar in some versions of OS X



(including the newly released Yosemite) could give hackers complete control over your Mac. If you use an account with Admin privileges, the bug, which has been dubbed Rootpipe, could give hackers root access to your machine, letting them steal your information or install malware without needing to know your password. Apple has been informed of the flaw, but details of how to exploit the bug have not been released.

bit.ly/rootpipe359

Adobe fixes critical vulnerabilities in Flash

Adobe has released a security update for Flash Player that patches critical flaws in the software. Security Bulletin APSB14-24 affects Windows, Mac and Linux versions of the program and addresses vulnerabilities that could potentially let attackers take over your system. The updates affecting Adobe Flash Player



Desktop Runtime and Adobe Flash Player Extended Support Release have both been given a priority rating of '1', meaning you should try to install them as soon as possible.

bit.ly/flash359

Snapchat warns against third-party apps

Snapchat has announced in a blog post that it will warn users to stop using third-party apps if they are caught doing so. This comes after a third-party service that offered to save snaps was compromised, resulting in thousands of private photos being leaked. From now on, Snapchat users will receive a notification informing them to stop using unauthorised apps and to change their password when this kind of activity is detected.

bit.ly/snapchat359



Security Helpdesk | Your questions answered by security specialists

THIS ISSUE'S EXPERT:
Alex Balan, Head of Product Management at BullGuard
(www.bullguard.com)



Q What's the best course of action if you receive a phishing email pretending to be from Amazon or PayPal?

Josh Webster, Facebook

A If you think you've received a phishing email from either Amazon,

PayPal or other similar organisations, simply forward the email to them and then delete it. Both companies have specific departments that deal with phishing and you can contact them at stop-spoofing@amazon.com and spoof@paypal.com.

You're likely to receive an automated response, so don't expect a personal reply. PayPal asks you to forward the email while Amazon would rather you send the phishing mail as an attachment. But don't forget to delete the email once you've forwarded it.

If you're in doubt about whether an email is genuine or a phishing attempt, check

if it's requesting personal information such as bank account and credit card details, passwords or VAT numbers. If it does, it's a phishing email, because no reputable company would ask for this info by email.

Q Do you really need security software on your Android phone if you only install apps from the Play Store?

Rebecca Clements, Facebook

A If you only use the official Play Store, you should be safe, although studies have shown that a small percentage of

malware-infected apps make it into the Play Store. But clearly most of the dangers come from unofficial app stores that don't check for malware.

Keep in mind that security software doesn't just tackle malware but comes with a raft of other important features not built into Android, such as the ability to find a lost phone, wipe data remotely and back up data to the cloud. Given the growing interest from hackers in Android devices, it's definitely a wise decision to equip our phones with the latest good anti-virus protection to protect us from threats.

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★ Best New Websites

Site of the Fortnight

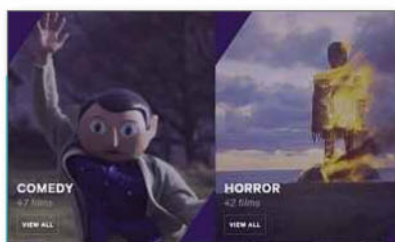
FILM

RELAUNCH

BFI Player player.bfi.org.uk

The revamped BFI Player is an early Christmas present for film buffs, with a smart new design and even more great movies to stream online. Huge photos and better navigation make it a pleasure to browse the BFI's extensive archive of world, independent and art house films, along with titles from Universal Pictures, such as *Back to the Future* and *ET*. Movies are organised into themed collections including Cult Cinema and 'Unavailable on DVD', and cost from £2 to £10 to rent for 30 days, plus you can watch over 450 fascinating British Edwardian shorts for free. It's a great alternative to mainstream streaming services.

Our rating



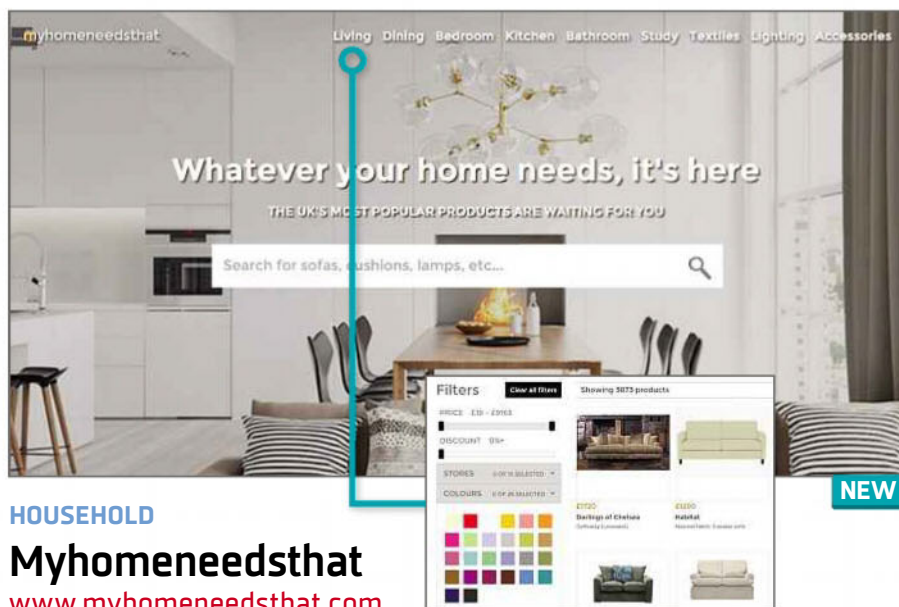
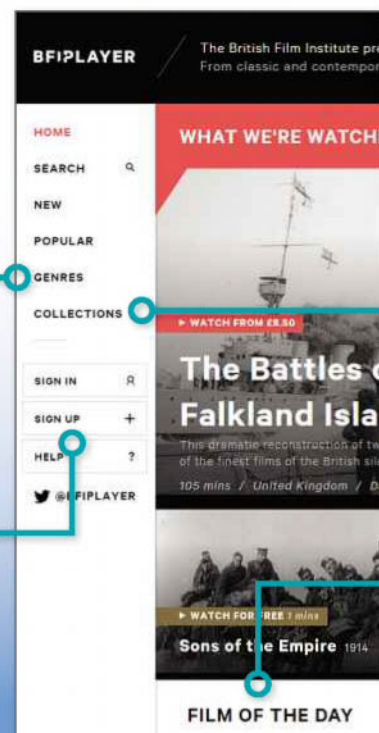
GENRES

There are hundreds of classic and recent movies to watch online



SIGN UP

Anyone can register, but BFI members get discounts

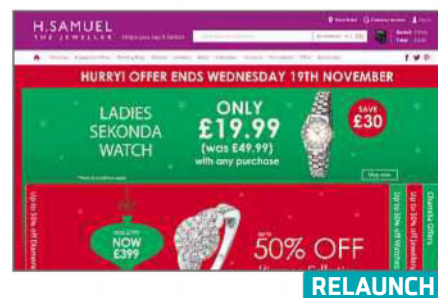


HOUSEHOLD

Myhomeneedsthat www.myhomeneedsthat.com

This fabulous search engine for furniture and homeware helps you find someone the perfect gift for their home. Either search for products such as cushions, lamps and sofas, or browse by room to view items from stores including John Lewis, Habitat and BHS. You can filter these by price and discount (the site helpfully provides active promo codes), and by colour, to find products to suit a particular scheme. We like that you can bookmark and enlarge items directly from the results page, before clicking More Info to visit the relevant retailer, and that you don't have to create an account. The site is very easy to use, and is a great way to compare prices between shops.

Our rating



JEWELLERY

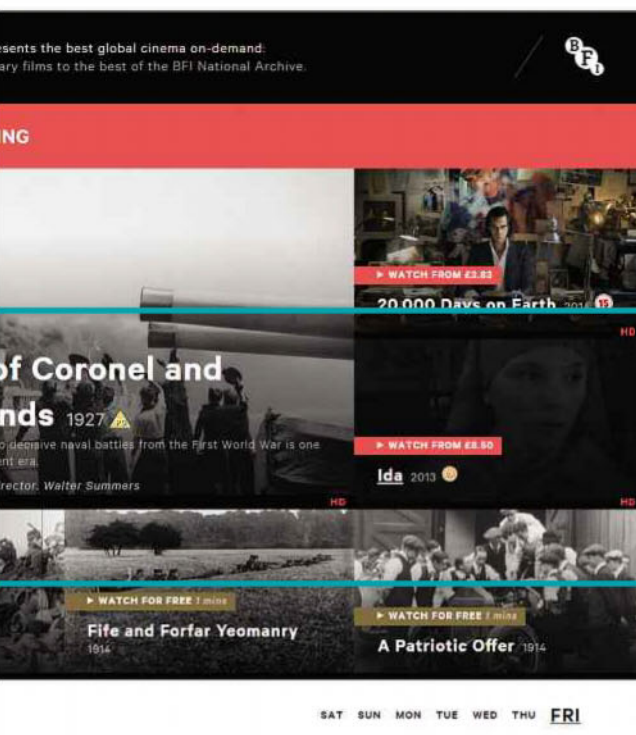
H Samuel www.hsamuel.co.uk

Get past the pushy offers on the homepage and the relaunched H Samuel website is decidedly more tasteful and better organised than before. Swish drop-down menus make it easier to browse new categories for engagement and wedding rings, beads and Christmas gifts (under the awful name 'Kissmas Collection'), and items are given more space to stand out. We like that you can filter each category using criteria ranging from price, material and style to occasion, stone type and the publication where you saw the item, which is handy if you know nothing about jewellery.

Our rating



We review this fortnight's best new and relaunched websites and rate them for content, design and features



COLLECTIONS
Discover amazing new films based on movies you've enjoyed

FILM OF THE DAY
Browse and watch the BFI's personal picks for the past week



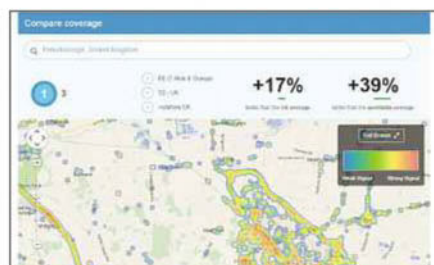
POLITICS

Vote for Animals

voteforanimals.org.uk

'Animals have friends and those friends have votes' is the credo of this simple site from the charity Animal Aid, which reveals your MP's personal and party stance on animal rights. Enter your postcode to view your MP's voting record and views on issues relating to hunting, culling, product testing, slaughterhouses, circuses and more. You can share your findings on Twitter, or tweet or email your MP to let them know that animals matter to you. The site's clearly stated 'political asks', briefing sheets and well-researched content give it a measured but determined tone.

Our rating



MOBILE

Mobiles.co.uk 4G Coverage Checker

bit.ly/mobiles359

As we reported last issue, many 4G customers in the UK aren't getting the speeds they pay for, so if you're planning to upgrade, it's worth using this coverage checker from phone store Mobiles.co.uk. Search for an area to see a heat map that shows where 4G signals are strongest and weakest. The site tells you which network offers the fastest speeds in that location; how this compares to UK and worldwide averages; and the top upload and download speeds. Unsurprisingly, cities fare best, while some rural locations can't even get decent 3G.

Our rating



FASHION

Christmas-t-shirts.co.uk

www.christmas-t-shirts.co.uk

Christmas jumpers can be too hot for indoors, so why not treat yourself or a loved one to a festive T-shirt instead? There are novelty designs for men, women and kids, bearing cheery reindeer, snowmen and penguins, and slogans such as 'Keep calm, it's nearly Xmas'. You can specify your desired size and colour on the item's page before paying for the T-shirt via the easy PayPal ordering process. Most T-shirts cost a reasonable £11.95, with free delivery across the board, so you've got no excuse not to wear your Christmas cheer.

Our rating





NEW

TRAVEL

ConnectingRoom

connectingroom.com

This site solves a common dilemma for parents taking their kids on holiday: finding a hotel that offers adjoining rooms. It lets you search accommodation in the UK, Europe and beyond, and specify the number and ages of your children to view available apartments, suites and family rooms on your chosen dates. The design is a bit scrappy and you can't actually book online (instead, you submit a request), but we like the idea and the site covers an interesting (if small) range of locations. Sadly, there weren't any guest reviews when we visited, so you'll need to research the hotels through TripAdvisor.

Our rating



RELAUNCH

CULTURE

Guardian Cities

www.theguardian.com/cities

When we reviewed Guardian Cities in Issue 339 (bit.ly/webuser339), we were rather underwhelmed by its bleak tone and lack of vision. The revamped site is much more appealing, with stunning photo galleries and engaging articles ('Why is Brighton so obsessed with coffee?') and a more spacious design. The content focuses more on how cities tackle and overcome their problems, with a section devoted to 'resilient' places such as Amsterdam, Barcelona and New York. We're also pleased that the site still attracts thoughtful comments and has retained its excellent map of city blogs from around the world.

Our rating



RELAUNCH

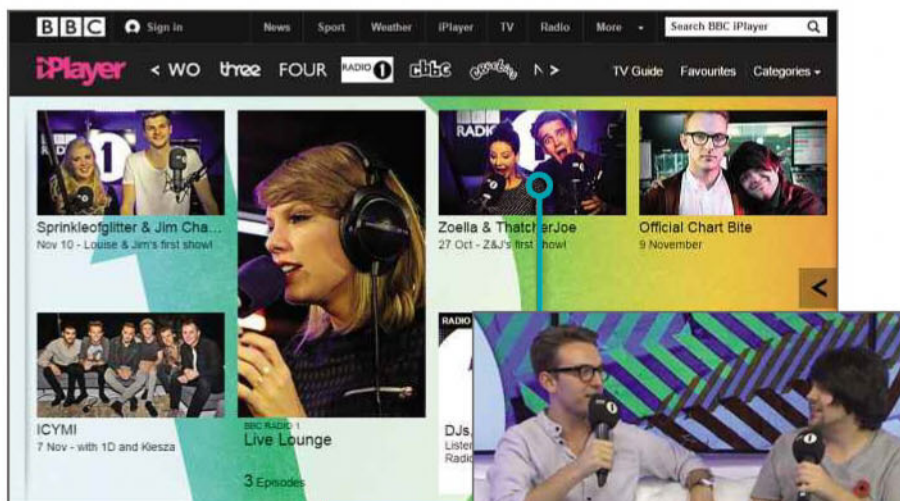
BOOKS

Pelican Books

www.pelicanbooks.com

The Penguin Books imprint that offers "short books on big subjects" has radically revamped its website to provide greater flexibility for reading its titles. Rather than downloading an ebook to your PC, e-reader or tablet, you can read the entire text online, with your reading position and highlighted passages synced across devices. You're able to read the first chapter of each book for free before paying £4.99 for the whole thing, and you can choose a different format such as paperback, Kindle or ePub. It's a splendid idea, with a bold, simple design, though it's a shame that there are only five books to choose from!

Our rating



RELAUNCH

MUSIC

Radio 1 on BBC iPlayer

www.bbc.co.uk/tv/radio1

You can now watch as well as listen to BBC Radio 1, on the station's new iPlayer video channel. This features exclusive live performances, including a set from the ubiquitous Taylor Swift, band interviews and behind-the-scenes documentaries, with all videos available to watch for 30 days. You also get to see Radio 1 presenters larking about in the studios, and watch Jack and Dean – "the most exciting double act in the digital world" – count down the UK's Top 10 singles. As with most iPlayer content, the videos are good quality and load quickly. We look forward to other BBC Radio stations getting their own channels, so we can find out what's *really* going on in *The Archers*.

Our rating



NEW

SPORT

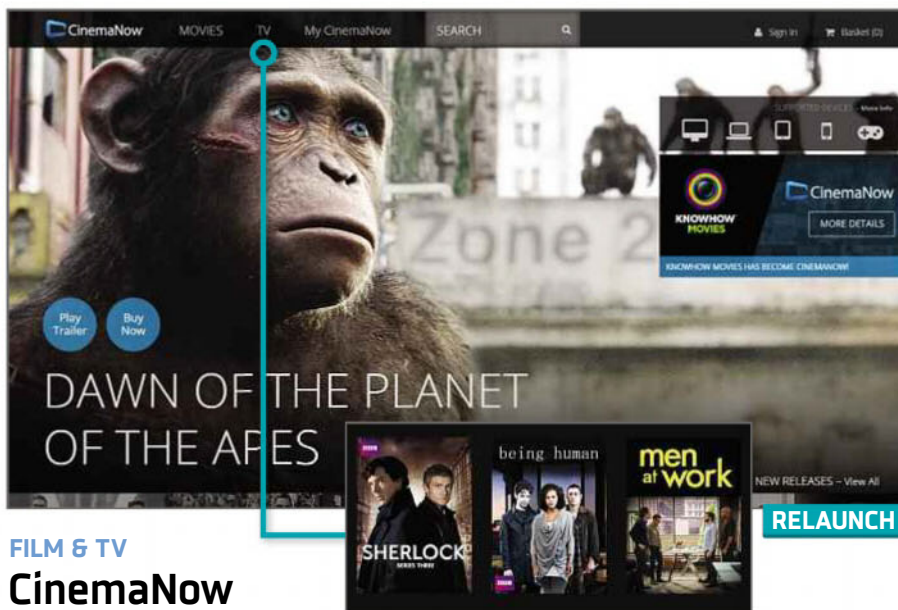
Athlos

www.athlos.co.uk

Anyone with an interest in sporting history will find plenty to enjoy at Athlos, which lets you read rare books about track and field athletics online. These publications date from the 19th century, so you won't find anything about Daley Thompson, but there are plans to extend the coverage to the 20th century. The presentation is superb, letting you flick through books in your browser as if they were in front of you, and you can easily enlarge, highlight and share the text. The publications, which include gems such as *British Manly Exercises* and *The Pedestrian's Record*, offer a fascinating glimpse into our sporting past.

Our rating





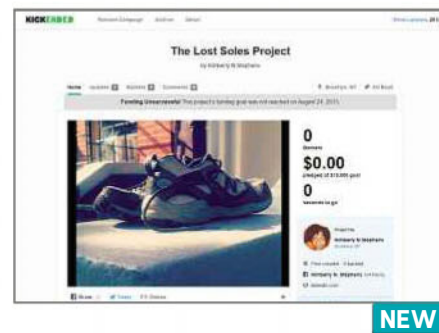
FILM & TV

CinemaNow

uk.cinemanow.com

Formerly called KnowHow Movies, this rebranded streaming service now has even more films and TV shows to enjoy. The visually-led design lets you hover your mouse over a large cover photo to buy or rent a title, in standard or high definition; add it to your wishlist; and view more information and a trailer. The site is now easier to browse on any device, which is just as well considering how many platforms it's available on, with the ingenious option to filter movies according to their score on Rotten Tomatoes. But the biggest change (aside from the name) is support for UltraViolet, which lets you watch films you've bought on DVD or Blu-ray by entering their codes online. Even if you never used KnowHow Movies, CinemaNow is definitely worth a look.

Our rating



CROWDFUNDING

Kickended

kickended.com

This painfully amusing website rounds up Kickstarter projects that attracted no backers and therefore no funding. It imitates the look of the popular crowdfunding website and currently has details of more than 9,500 flops, including the date on which creators were forced to abandon their dream. You can peruse the projects by clicking the Random Campaign button at the top of the page to discover such delights as *The Lost Soles Project*, a photo book about abandoned shoes; and novel *Murder at Club Fishnet*, "a hysterical farce about a murder that takes place in a brothel". It seems cruel to laugh, but it's hard not to.

Our rating



+ ALSO NEW

MUSIC

Big Top 40 Show

www.bigtop40.com

★★★★☆

The Vodafone-sponsored weekly music chart, based on iTunes sales, has relaunched its website with a design that's easier to navigate. You can play new songs and videos; catch up with gossip about your favourite artists; enter competitions to win concert tickets; and buy tracks directly from iTunes. It's especially appealing if you're a One Direction fan.

SPORT

Michael Schumacher

www.michael-schumacher.de/en

★★★★☆

The family of the Formula One racing legend has relaunched his website for the first time since his skiing accident a year ago. The site concentrates on Schumacher's successes, with plenty of high-quality photos, infographics of his achievements, messages from fans and even a selection of autograph cards to download.

ENVIRONMENT

Flood Ready

www.floodready.co.uk

★★★★☆

With north-west England suffering dreadful flooding in recent years, this site has been set up to provide weather and flood warnings for that part of the country. As well as checking your flood risk and taking a quiz about flooding, you can view articles and illustrations that explain the impact of flood water and how the risk is being managed.

MONEY

To Your Credit

www.toyourcredit.org.uk

★★★★☆

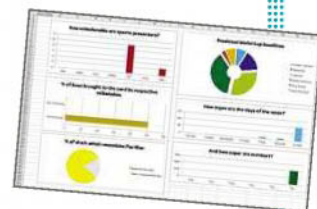
This initiative from the Archbishop of Canterbury takes on payday loan companies by promoting local, church-based credit unions. You can learn more about how these work; watch videos of members' stories; and find out how to get involved. We like the integrated Twitter feed, but the faint grey text on a white background makes some content hard to read.



WEBSITE SECRETS

Disguise your gambling from the boss

It might be nearly Christmas, but it's never too late for an Easter Egg, especially if it's as amusing as the one on Skybet (www.skybet.com). If you're having an online flutter when you should be working, you can instantly hide your activities from prying eyes by clicking the 'Boss? Look busy!' silhouette button on the left-hand side of the page. This will switch the current view to a spreadsheet, complete with tables and graphs. The data on this is slightly silly ('How super are days of the week?' and '% of chart which resembles Pac Man'), but it's less incriminating than a gambling site.



Build a Better Site

Specialist tips, top tools and practical help

Top Tips of the Fortnight

Firefox's new Developer Edition

Mozilla has rebranded Firefox Aurora (the test version of the browser where new technologies are trialled before passing into the beta version) as Firefox Developer Edition. It now has extra tools to help website creators develop and test their sites, including Responsive Design View, to ensure your site works in different-sized browsers; JavaScript Debugger to iron out bugs; and Style Editor to sort your CSS.

Firefox Developer Edition can be downloaded from bit.ly/ffde359 and installed alongside the regular version of Firefox, so

you can still use the basic browser when you're not working on your website.

Easy HTML5 animation

HTML5 has a range of tools for creating animations, so you can avoid using Flash on your site. However, if you don't want to learn how to code, you'll need a program such as Incomedia's new WebAnimator software. This adds a friendly interface to web animation that makes it easy to create animated banners, icons and buttons. The software costs from £49.99 and is available from www.webanimator.com.

Deal of the Fortnight

Compila (www.compila.com) is offering 15 per cent off its annual hosting packages, with its £16.79 per year Starter Hosting Plan available for £14.27.

Web-building Helpdesk

THIS ISSUE'S EXPERT:

Russell Hogg,
Managing
Director,
Hogtronix

(www.hogtronix.com)



Q Is it still worth putting keywords and a description into meta tags?

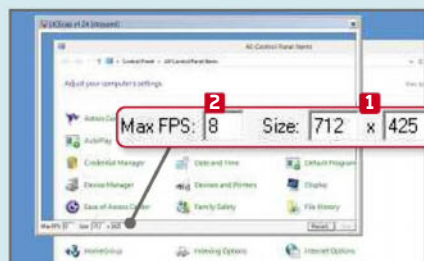
Jason Cooper, via Facebook

A While the 'value' of the keyword meta tag in particular is no longer as important for search-engine optimisation (SEO), I'd still be inclined to include this and the meta description tag, because the latter is often used in Google search-engine results. Just remember to keep the description to no more than two shortish sentences (ideally no more than 150 characters or so) and don't keep replicating words in either tag or you could be flagged as a spammer. Also, make sure the meta tags are different on each and every page.

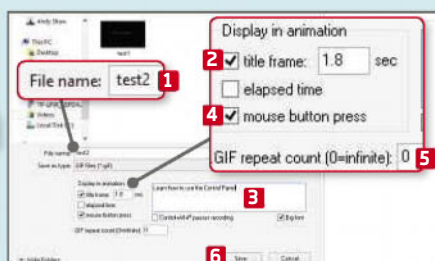


MINI WORKSHOP | Make screen-captured videos using animated GIFs
LICEcap: cockos.com/licecap |  10 mins |  XP, Vista, 7, 8+

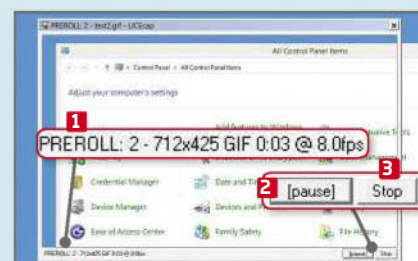
The best way to teach something on a website is to use a demonstration video. LICEcap provides a quick and easy way to create screen-captured videos from your onscreen actions as compact animated GIFs



1 Launch the software and move the window to where you'd like to record. Drag its corners to resize it and the Size information **1** will change accordingly. Increase the frame rate **2** if you wish, though the default setting of 8fps (frames per second) will show all your movements clearly while keeping files to a manageable size.



2 Click the Record button, choose where to save the file and give it a name. **1** If you want a title frame, tick the option **2** and write the title in the box. **3** Tick 'mouse button press' **4** to add a circle when a mouse button is clicked. Change 'GIF repeat count' **5** to '1' if you only want it to play through once. Click Save. **6**



3 You get a few seconds 'preroll' **1** to prepare before recording begins. Click the Pause button **2** to take a break. You get another preroll when you unpause. You can move the window to focus on a different area of the screen, or move the software beneath it. Click Stop **3** when you're done. Open the GIF file in a browser to see the animation.

30-day
money
back
guarantee

25GB Exchange 2013 mailbox
& FREE .co.uk domain included*

Powerful
website
builder with
online shop

Fasthosts keeps my website up and running

*Fasthosts have been supporting
UK businesses for over 15 years*

We know a thing or two when it comes to hosting for business, that's why we're offering a fantastic price for the first three months to help you get started and get the most out of having your business online.

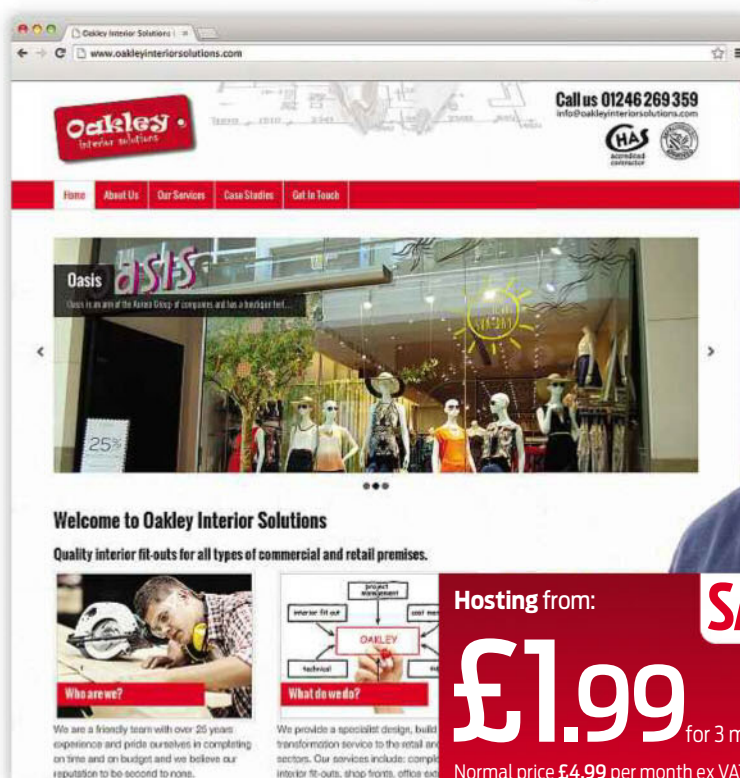
With great performance, security and expert support 24/7, Fasthosts is the choice for business.

 **TRUSTPILOT**



Trustpilot rating correct at time of going to print 10/2014.

* Free domain included for 1 year, includes .co.uk and .net domains. After 1 year regular prices apply. Visit www.fasthosts.co.uk for full product details, terms and conditions.



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Inspiring Better Business

Product Test

We test and compare the latest products

Google Nexus 9

Andy Shaw finds out whether Google's latest Android tablet can challenge the iPad's supremacy

Google's first tablet, the Nexus 7, provided an affordable alternative to those unwilling to spend a small fortune on an Apple iPad. It paved the way for a variety of great-value Android tablets including the recently launched Hudl2, which we gave five stars in Issue 357's Product Test (bit.ly/webuser357). But it seems that with the Nexus 9, Google is using a very different strategy to compete with Apple's iPads.

Build quality

The Nexus 9 doesn't quite match the iPad's design quality, but it's not far off. It's the best-looking Android tablet we've handled to date, and feels very well built. The rear casing comes in a choice of three colours (black, white or gold, with the latter exclusive to the 32GB version), which feels soft to the touch and doesn't bend or flex when put under (reasonable) pressure.

However, it's made from matt plastic, which isn't as classy as the iPad Air's metal case, and while the Nexus 9's brushed metal edges, minimal buttons and cut-back ports gives it a pleasingly sleek look, it means there's no microSD card slot for expanding the memory capacity.

At 8mm, the Nexus 9 is as thin as the original iPad Air,

though Apple has made the new Air 2 even thinner (6.1mm). It weighs 425g, which places it between the iPad Air and the Mini 3 (reviewed on page 22).

QXGA screen

The widescreen aspect ratio usually seen on Android tablets has been ditched for the iPad's squarer 4:3 ratio.

Movie buffs may be appalled, because it forces more black surround on widescreen video, but most other applications are improved at this ratio, particularly web browsing in landscape orientation, where you get the benefits of maximum horizontal width without losing so much vertical depth.

We were concerned that Android games developed for widescreen tablets might suffer, but they were resized without a problem on every title we tested. The screen's QXGA resolution (2,048 x 1,536 pixels) makes for a pixel



“ If you're a fan of Android, you can now buy a tablet without feeling you're getting second best ”

density of 264 pixels per inch, which is just as good as Apple's Retina iPad Airs. The level of detail on screen is superb, with everything from images to text looking crisp and sharp.

We used a hardware colour calibrator to detect the range of colours displayed by the Nexus 9. It measured an impressive 93.8 per cent of colours available in the sRGB standard, which is even better than the latest iPad Air 2 (which scored 90.1 per cent). It's also one of the brightest displays we've seen, with a maximum brightness measuring 466.4cd/m². This makes it easy to read, even if you are out in the sunshine where screen glare can be a problem. The darkest black level was impressive, too, getting down to 0.38cd/m², which makes for an excellent contrast ratio of 1,224:1.

Performance and speed

The Nexus 9 managed a time of 908.8ms in our SunSpider JavaScript browser benchmark test (bit.ly/sunspi359), which is a respectable score but by no means spectacular. It was significantly slower than the iPad Air 2, which performs the test in 295.8ms – the fastest mobile device we've tested for browser speed. But in regular use we didn't experience any slowdown, with quick loading and smooth scrolling even on graphics-heavy sites.

Performance in our gaming test was much better. Using the Ice Storm Unlimited benchmark, the Nexus 9 clocked-up a score of 25,621, which is faster than both the iPad Air (14,821) and the iPad Air 2 (21,548). The only tablet we've seen perform the test faster is the Nvidia Shield Tablet, which is specifically designed for gamers and scored 27,000.



Software and hardware

The Nexus 9 is one of the first devices to launch with Android 5.0 Lollipop. Because it's a Google tablet, it runs a pure version of the operating system, without any of the (mostly unwanted) extra bits and bobs that you often find on other manufacturers' devices. Android 5.0 has a flatter look, and there are slick new menus and animations that look great on the tablet's screen. For example, Notifications uses a Google Now-style interface, designed to look like you're flicking through cards. It's a definite improvement over the previous version.

Most people use phones rather than tablets to take photos, and the 8-megapixels camera on the Nexus 9 isn't likely to change that. We found its snaps produced muted colours and lacked

sharpness. In low light, a lot of detail was lost in the shadows.

The tablet's front-facing speakers are more impressive, though, with HTC's BoomSound technology used to great effect. They produce the best sound we've heard on a tablet and can be turned up surprisingly high.

But the best news is that the Nexus 9's 6,700mAh built-in battery, which produced excellent battery life in our video playback test. With the tablet in Airplane mode, and

the screen brightness and volume set to halfway, we managed 15 hours and 57 minutes before the battery gave out. That's around three and-a-half hours more than the iPad Air or iPad Air 2 in similar tests.

Value for money

At £319, the 8.9in Nexus 9 costs the same as the 16GB version of Apple's original iPad Air, a device with a 9.7in screen that recently fell in price following the release of the Air 2. It's also the same price as the new iPad Mini 3, which has a smaller 7.9in screen.

However, that's just for the 16GB model, and it's a very a steep jump to £399 if you want the 32GB version. Even Apple only charges £359 for the old 32GB iPad Air, and the same price increase on an iPad Mini 3 will get you 64GB.

PRODUCT INFO

Google Nexus 9

play.google.com/nexus

Price: £319 (16GB),
£399 (32GB)

SPECIFICATIONS

- 8.9in IPS LCD Gorilla Glass 3 screen
- QXGA (2,048 x 1,536 pixels) screen
- 4:3 aspect ratio
- 8-megapixels rear camera with auto-focus and LED flash
- 1.6-megapixels front camera
- Android 5.0 Lollipop OS
- 228 x 154 x 8mm
- 425 g
- Available in Indigo Black, Lunar White or Sand (32GB only)

FOR

- ✓ An Android tablet to rival the iPad
- ✓ Great screen
- ✓ Get the new version of Android first

AGAINST

- ✗ Average camera
- ✗ Lacked some performance in our JavaScript test

CHEAPER ALTERNATIVE

Tesco Hudl2, £129
bit.ly/hudl359



STILL THE ULTIMATE

Apple iPad Air 2, £399
www.apple.com/uk



OUR VERDICT

The Nexus 9 is the best Android tablet we've ever seen. The screen is wonderful, the speakers are great, the battery life is fantastic and the build quality and design are better than everything bar

the iPad Air. It's not without its niggles, but if you want a powerful Android tablet, then right now nothing else competes. We still think the iPad Air 2 is a nose ahead, but if you're a fan of Android, you can now buy a



FEATURES	★★★★★
PERFORMANCE	★★★★☆
EASE OF USE	★★★★★
VALUE FOR MONEY	★★★★☆

tablet without feeling you're getting second best.

Apple iPad Mini 3

Andy Shaw examines the latest version of Apple's 7.9in tablet: the iPad Mini 3

While Google has been busy with its Nexus 9 tablet (see our review on page 20), Apple has launched the iPad Air 2 (see our First Look in Issue 357 – bit.ly/webuser357) and the iPad Mini 3.

The Mini 3 is one of the most attractive compact tablets around. It feels solid, but light (331g for the Wi-Fi model and 341g for the 4G version), so it's easily held in



“ The Mini 3 is one of the most attractive compact tablets around ”

PRODUCT INFO

Apple iPad Mini 3

www.apple.com/uk

**Price: Wi-Fi – £319 (16GB), £399 (64GB), £479 (128GB)
Wi-Fi & 4G – £419 (16GB), £499 (64GB), £579 (128GB)**

SPECIFICATIONS

- 64-bit A7 chip with M7 motion co-processor
- 7.9in IPS display
- 2,048 x 1,536 pixels resolution
- 326 pixels per inch
- 1.2-megapixels front-facing and 5-megapixels rear-facing cameras
- 802.11a/b/g/n dual-band Wi-Fi
- Bluetooth 4.0
- Fingerprint identity sensor
- 200 x 135 x 7.5mm
- 331g (Wi-Fi), 341g (Wi-Fi & 4G)

FOR

- ✓ Well designed and solidly built compact tablet
- ✓ Best value at higher memory configurations

AGAINST

- ✗ 16GB Nexus 9 is same price for bigger screen and overall better performance
- ✗ Not much of an upgrade on significantly cheaper iPad Mini 2

one hand. It's also now available in Gold, as well as Silver and Space Grey.

The main upgrade over the iPad Mini 2 is the introduction of Touch ID, which has worked its way down from the iPhone. This saves you typing a four-digit code to unlock the device. The internal chips remain unchanged and the Mini 3's 7.9in display uses the same 1,536 x 2,048 IPS panel as the Mini 2, with a maximum brightness of 428cd/m² and a contrast ratio of 839:1. These are good specifications, but not as good as the Nexus 9, while the colour accuracy is disappointing, only producing 71.5 per cent of sRGB colours compared to the Nexus 9's 93.8 per cent.

The results of the Mini 3's performance tests were similar to those we got from the Mini 2. We noticed a slight decrease in speed in our SunSpider times (445ms compared to 418ms), though both are faster than the Nexus 9 at 908.9ms. The Geekbench 3 results were also fractionally lower (2,475 compared to

2,526 in the multi-core tests) but the Peacekeeper score was a vast improvement (2,214 compared to 1,763). However, most of these changes are likely due to iOS 8.1. Gaming performance improved slightly, with the GFXBench T-Rex HD test rising from 21fps to 22.6fps.

In our battery test, the Mini 3 put in a solid performance. With the display set at a brightness of 120cd/m², Wi-Fi off and a 720p movie on repeat, Apple's compact tablet lasted 10 hours and 43

minutes.

The launch of the Mini 3 has made the Mini 2's new price (£239 for 16GB or £279 for 32GB) look very attractive. But for the same price as the 16GB Mini 3, you could get the Nexus 9, which has a bigger screen and better performance. However, if memory is a priority, it's worth noting that the biggest capacity Nexus 9 is just 32GB and costs £399, the same as Apple's 64GB Mini 3. There's also a 128GB version of the Mini 3 for £479.

OUR VERDICT



The iPad Mini 3 is an attractive, well-designed compact tablet. It doesn't offer particularly great value in its 16GB configuration, but the 64GB version now costs the same as the previous 32GB model, which is a tempting deal if you can afford it.

If this is still too expensive, have another

FEATURES	★★★★☆
PERFORMANCE	★★★★☆
EASE OF USE	★★★★★
VALUE FOR MONEY	★★★☆☆

look at the Mini 2, which remains surprisingly competitive in its performance, and is only missing the Mini 3's Touch ID and Gold case option.

WI-FI

Finally in any room*



- ✓ Better than any Wi-Fi repeater
- ✓ Enjoy Wi-Fi in any room*
- ✓ Best reception for smartphones and tablets



dLAN® 500 WiFi Starter Kit

- Unpack, plug in, get started
- Improves Wi-Fi reception and range
- Engineered in Germany
- 3-year manufacturer's warranty

* Required: broadband Internet connection, router and active power sockets within one property.

amazon.co.uk

The electronics specialist
maplin

currys

PC World



More information:
www.devolo.co.uk/wi-fi
Tel.: +44 (0)1865 784344
Email: sales@devolo.co.uk

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Web User's Best Buys

Web User and its sister titles test over 2,500 products every year

HARDWARE

DESKTOP PC

Chillblast Fusion Obelisk

£699.98 from www.chillblast.com

Date tested: November 2014



This great all-round desktop PC achieved a good overall performance in both our Windows and gaming tests. It runs quietly, has a good-quality monitor and is packed with great components, including a fast SSD and a generous hard drive.

KEY SPECS

Quad-core 4.2GHz Intel Core i5-4690K processor (overclocked) ■ 8GB of memory ■ 5 x USB3, 5 x USB2 ports ■ Gigabit Ethernet ■ 120GB SSD ■ 1TB hard drive ■ 1,920 x 1,080 pixels resolution ■ Windows 8.1 ■ 465 x 430 x 192mm

KEYBOARD

Cherry MX-Board 3.0

£55 from www.kikatek.com

Date tested: November 2014



The Cherry MX-Board 3.0 is a hard-wearing mechanical keyboard that's a pleasure to type on. It doesn't have lots of features, but it's ideal if you're looking for a standard, good-quality keyboard.

KEY SPECS

104 keys ■ 1 X USB port ■ 1.8m detachable cable ■ 2 non-slip surfaces ■ 2 rubber caps for adjustable feet ■ 44.6 x 15.8 x 2.8cm ■ 0.83kg ■ Win-Key lock

BUDGET LAPTOP

Asus X200MA

£175.55 from www.amazon.co.uk

Date tested: October 2014



This is a compact, portable laptop at a great price that will manage the latest version of Windows and provide more than four hours of battery life.

KEY SPECS

2.16GHz Intel Celeron N2830 dual-core processor ■ 500GB hard drive ■ 2GB memory ■ 11.6in (non-touch) screen ■ 1,366 x 768 pixels resolution ■ 1 x USB 3 port, 2 x USB 2 ports ■ 1 x 10/100 Ethernet, 802.11n dual-band Wi-Fi ■ 302 x 200 x 26mm ■ 1.2kg ■ One-year return-to-base warranty

NAS DRIVE

Asustor AS-202TE

£199.66 from www.scan.co.uk

Date tested: September 2014



This NAS drive put in an excellent performance in our tests, transferring files over our network faster than any of the other devices we tested. It has an impressive range of tools, including an HDMI output for streaming to TV.

KEY SPECS

EXT4 file system ■ SATA3 hard drive ■ 2 x 3.5in bays ■ 1 x 10/100/1,000 Ethernet ■ 2 x USB 2 ports, 2 x USB 3 ports ■ 1 x HDMI (1.4a) ■ 1 x 3.5mm mini-jack ■ 230 x 164 x 108mm ■ 1.87kg ■ Two-year return-to-base warranty

WQHD MONITOR

AOC q2770Pqu

£367.96 from www.dabs.com

Date tested: August 2014



The AOC q2770Pqu has an exceptional, high-quality screen and is very reasonably priced. Its settings are preconfigured, so you don't need to tweak them to improve the display, and it has all the ports you'll ever need.

KEY SPECS

27in widescreen ■ 2,560 x 1,440 pixels resolution ■ Portrait mode ■ Adjustable stand ■ 2 x 2W speakers ■ DisplayPort, DVI, HDMI, VGA, 2 x USB 3.0 and 2 x USB 2.0 ports ■ 642 x 245 x 428mm ■ 8kg ■ 3-years return-to-base warranty

HD MONITOR

BenQ EW2740L

£194 from www.ebuyer.com

Date tested: July 2014



The BenQ EW2740L is an excellent-value 27in monitor with good image quality. It supports MHL, so you can connect a compatible mobile device to it, and has two HDMI ports and one VGA port.

KEY SPECS

27in widescreen ■ 1,920 x 1,080 pixels resolution ■ 2W stereo speakers ■ MHL support ■ 2 x HDMI and 1 x VGA ports ■ 320 x 115 x 95mm ■ One-year return-to-base warranty

SOFTWARE & SERVICES**ONLINE STORAGE****Google Drive****From free** from drive.google.com**Date tested:** August 2014

Google Drive is easy to use and has lots of free storage. The Windows software neatly integrates with Explorer, which makes saving and syncing files as simple as keeping them in any other PC folder.

**KEY FEATURES**

15GB of free storage ■ Web-based office software ■ Compatible with Windows XP, Vista, 7 and 8+ ■ Chrome browser add-on ■ Android and iOS apps ■ 100GB extra storage for £1.19 per month; 1TB for £5.97 per month; 10TB for £59.51 per month

ONLINE SITE BUILDER**Weebly****From free** from www.weebly.com**Date tested:** May 2014

Weebly's drag-and-drop interface makes it extremely easy to use.

Its templates are a little restrictive, but there are still plenty of options to choose from and the results look great. It also has free Android and iOS apps, although these only offer limited editing.

**KEY FEATURES**

115 templates ■ Unlimited storage ■ SEO tools ■ Meta tags ■ Password protection ■ E-commerce tools ■ Ad-free Starter edition ■ Android and iOS apps ■ RSS ■ Site stats

PHOTO EDITING**Adobe Photoshop Elements 12****£54.71** from www.adobe.com/uk**Date tested:** March 2014

With its tidy, uncluttered interface and pop-out trays, Adobe Photoshop Elements provides everything an amateur photographer could need and helps you quickly find the right editing tools.

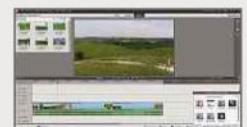
**KEY FEATURES**

Compatible with Windows XP, Vista, 7, 8+, including 64-bit versions ■ Bundled photo organiser ■ Content-aware edits ■ Guided edits ■ People-beautifier tools ■ RAW support



I spy with my little eye domains ending in...

.actor .buzz .club .email .guru
.ink .host .ninja .photos .press
.recipes .pub .reviews .support
.tips .website .webcam .wiki

Think
DifferentThink
ContextThink
Available
www.blacknight.host sales@blacknight.host @blacknight
VIDEO EDITING**Adobe Premiere Elements 12****£62.34** from www.ballicom.co.uk**Date tested:** October 2013

Premiere Elements 12's superb interface makes its many features neat but accessible. You won't find better video-editing software for the price.

KEY FEATURES

Automatic editing ■ Export to multiple video formats ■ Image stabiliser ■ Upload to Facebook, YouTube and Vimeo ■ Surround-sound support ■ DVD and Blu-ray disc-burning ■ Unlimited timelines ■ Stop-motion capture

WEB FILTER**Norton Family****Free** from www.symantec.com**Date tested:** October 2013

This family-friendly software has all the most important filtering features and does an excellent job of blocking potentially harmful sites. It's also free to download and use.

KEY FEATURES

10-PC licence ■ Compatible with Windows XP/Vista/7/8, Mac OS X 10.7+ ■ Customisable profiles ■ Category filters ■ Whitelist/blacklist ■ Remote management ■ Email support

Best Free Software

PHOTO EDITOR

Image Tuner 5.0

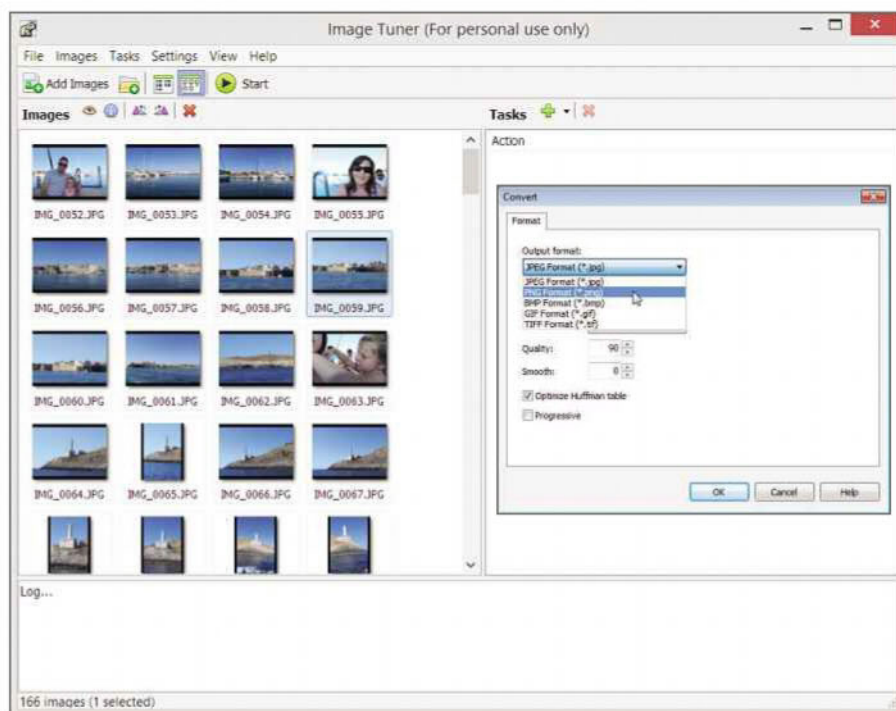
bit.ly/image359

Min requirements: Windows XP/
Vista/7/8+

File size: 2.1MB

If you have a folder full of images that you want to resize so that they are better suited to emailing, posting on Facebook or sharing in other ways, a batch-processing tool such as Image Tuner can save you a lot of time and effort. Instead of resizing each photo individually, you select as many as you like, choose some tasks to apply, then let the program make all the changes for you. As well as resizing your photos, Image Tuner can convert the files into a different format, rename them, strip out information, remove or update EXIF data and add a watermark. It can even apply some effects and actions, such as flip, rotate, colourise, crop, filter and add borders.

Although it seems very simple, it does actually offer a lot of advanced features and gives you complete control over the changes you make. Choose to resize a batch of photos, for example, and you can resize them by percentage, pixels, inches or centimetres, and pick from a selection of resizing filters (if you don't know your Lanczos3 from your Bell or Hermite, you might want to stick with

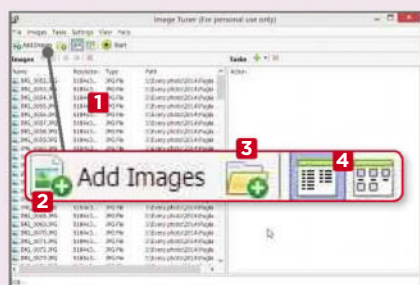


the default suggestion).

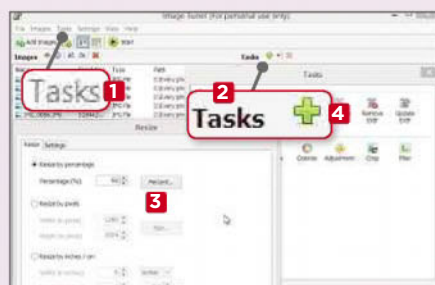
This new version of Image Tuner is a major revision and sports a brand new user interface, which makes the software easier to use. It also gains additional features and options as well as an updated image-processing engine, so it's quicker and more efficient. Program performance has been enhanced across the board, and it's fully compatible with the Windows 10 Technical Preview, too.



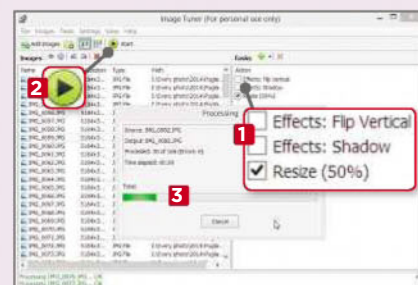
MINI WORKSHOP | Process photos using Image Tuner



1 Drag a bunch of photos to the program window **1** or click the Add Images button **2** to load them. If you have a folder full of photos, click the 'Add Folder with Images' button **3** and navigate to the directory you want to load. You can switch between List and Thumbnails view. **4**

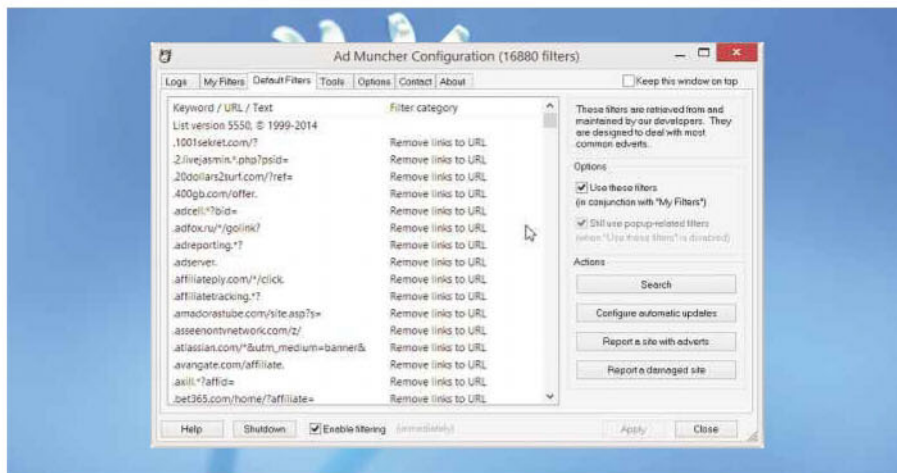


2 Click the Tasks button **1** or go to Tasks in the Menu bar **2** and select the actions you want to apply to your images. Double-click a task to access any available settings for it. **3** Click the Add button **4** to queue up your chosen tasks. These will be applied to all of your photos.



3 You can deselect any of your chosen actions **1** if you decide against using them. When you're happy with your choices, click the Start button, **2** select a folder where you want to save the new versions and the software will go to work making all your changes. Progress will be shown in the log window. **3**

This fortnight's top new software downloads to help you make the most of your PC, and they're all FREE



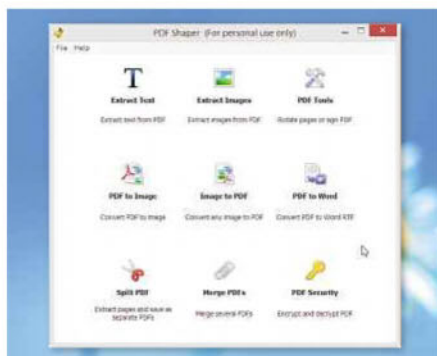
AD BLOCKER

Ad Muncher

www.admuncher.com

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8+ **File size:** 548KB

Ad Muncher used to cost \$29.95 (£18.86) but its developer has now decided to make it available for free. Unlike other ad blockers, Ad Muncher isn't an add-on for your browser but rather a standalone Windows program. This means it can block adverts and pop-ups in all the browsers on your system, and also kill ads in other programs, such as Winamp, ICQ and FeedDemon. It's highly configurable, so you can choose whether to allow harmless text ads or block everything.



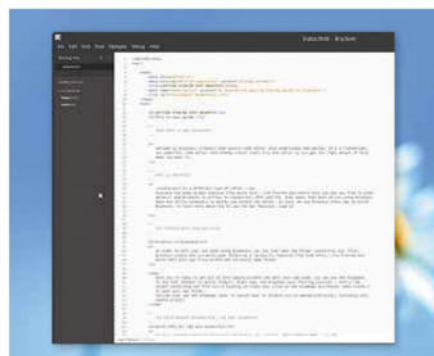
PDF TOOLKIT

PDF Shaper 3

bit.ly/pdfshaper359

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8+ **File size:** 5.3MB

PDF Shaper is a collection of nine tools that lets you merge, split, encrypt and decrypt PDF files; extract text and images; and convert pictures to PDF (and vice versa) or to Word. Just choose the tool you want from the single-screen menu, then load the PDF or image you want to work with. The latest version has a redesigned interface and benefits from various performance and usability improvements.



WEBSITE EDITOR

Brackets with Extract (Preview)

brackets.io

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8+ **File size:** 41.1MB

The Adobe-created Brackets makes it easier to code websites by hand. This modern, open-source text editor for web developers simplifies the process of entering HTML, CSS and JavaScript, and navigating lots of code. The bundled Extract (Preview) tool can pull design information from a Photoshop (PSD) file, turning details, colours, fonts, and measurement info into clean CSS.

New Windows 8 Apps

CBS News

bit.ly/cbsnews359

Min requirements: Windows 8+

File size: 4MB

This stylish app keeps you updated on breaking news and the latest developing stories from around the world. You can browse stories by category and watch videos, full programmes and even a live stream of CBS News.



Beach Buggy Racing

bit.ly/beachbuggy359

Min requirements: Windows 8+

File size: 84.5MB

This fun racing game is similar to Mario Kart. You race against rival drivers, each with different personalities and special abilities. There are six game modes and 12 different race tracks.



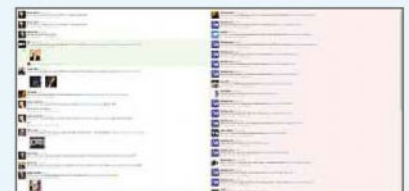
Flantter.Cascade

bit.ly/flantter359

Min requirements: Windows 8+

File size: 1.9MB

This unofficial Twitter client offers a multi-column layout to view different Twitter streams, mentions and direct messages at the same time. You need to allow it to connect to your Twitter account.



SYSTEM TOOL

Auslogics Registry Defrag 8

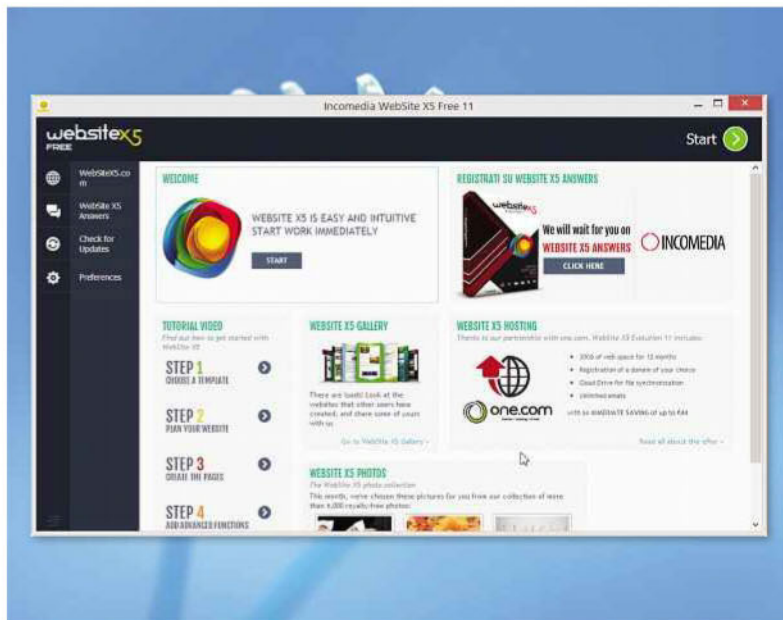
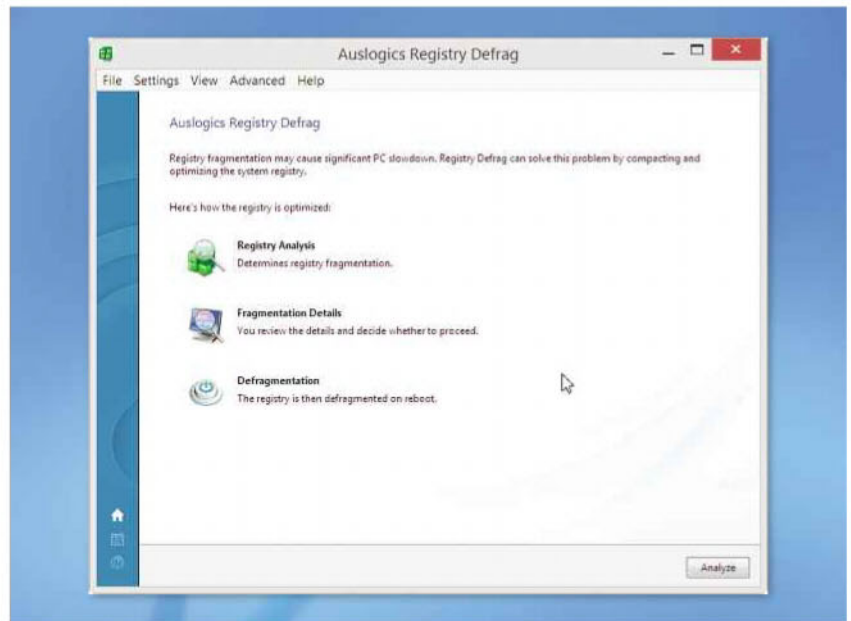
www.auslogics.com

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8+

File size: 6.7MB

Windows Registry errors can lead to system instability, slowdowns and crashes. Auslogics Registry Cleaner helps you find and fix problems by analysing your Registry, letting you view the details and then defragging the database. The new version can automatically defrag the Registry while the program is running, and the defragmentation algorithms have been improved. The software can run a general system status check, too, but to fix any found issues, you'll be directed to download Auslogics BoostSpeed.

- Make sure the Custom option is selected when installing Registry Defrag to stop it making unwanted changes to your PC.



WEBSITE BUILDER

WebSite X5 Free 11

www.webstex5.com

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8+

File size: 92.2MB

Thanks to tools such as WebSite X5 Free, creating your own web presence has never been easier. The software uses a wizard to guide you through the design process – simply give your project a name, enter some site details (including your desired web address), then choose your template and template style elements and create a site map and pages. The free version limits you to 10 pages per site, and 50 possible designs, although you can create as many sites as you like. You can publish the finished project on the web or export it to your hard drive. The graphic interface and wizard have been improved in this new version, as has template management, with the library automatically updated when new templates are released.

TASK MANAGER

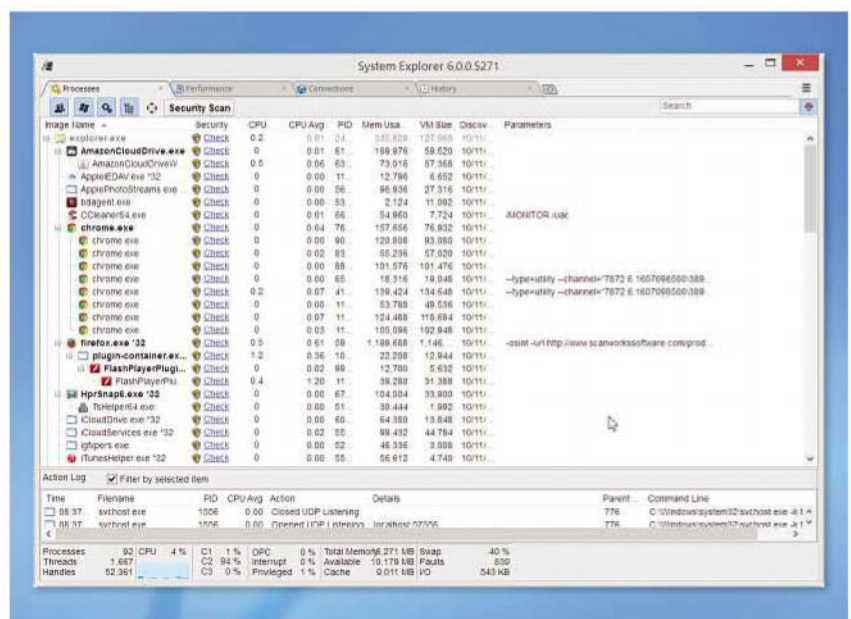
System Explorer 6

systemexplorer.net

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8+

File size: 2MB

The built-in Task Manager in Windows shows you the programs and processes running in the background on your PC and lets you quickly terminate any misbehaving ones. System Explorer is an advanced alternative that provides a more detailed breakdown on the items that are running and lets you check suspicious files for malware. New to this build is an improved history module that provides more details on what's being going on behind the scenes with your PC. There's an action log which displays the history of running processes, and a brand new status bar that gives you a handy overview of your system state.





GAME

Pirates vs. Robots

bit.ly/pirates359

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8+, or Mac OS X

File size: 54.5MB

Captain Steelshin has been marooned on a jungle island full of robots created by his arch-nemesis, Bronzefist. Luckily, the resourceful pirate is armed with a cutlass, a pistol and a rather nifty peg-leg-mounted cannon which can do a fair amount of damage (provided you have enough oil). The game offers some amusing pirate dialogue as you play.

Don't install...

GameGain

bit.ly/gamegain359

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8+
File size: 3.9MB

This tool for optimising your PC to improve gaming performance gets everything wrong. It's bundled with the dodgy extra RelevantKnowledge; it offers only a single Optimize Now option (with no explanation of the changes it makes); and it costs \$9.99 (£6.29), with the free trial offering very limited functionality. It's also frustratingly slow.



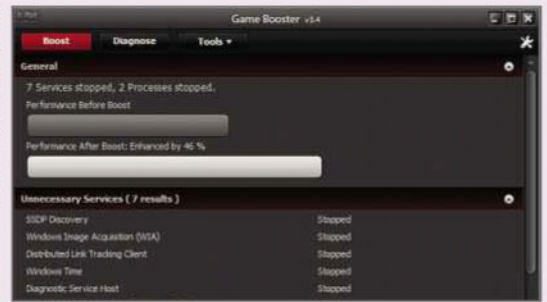
...Install this instead

IObit Game Booster 3

bit.ly/gamebooster359

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8+
File size: 19.1MB

There are lots of tools that claim to optimise your PC for gaming, but IObit's was one of the first and remains the best. Just click its Start Boost button to free up resources and adjust system settings automatically. If you dig deeper, you can discover which services Game Booster deems detrimental to gaming performance; diagnose problems on your PC that may affect how games run; apply Registry tweaks, such as speeding up menus; and defrag a game to make it run more smoothly. Best of all, there's a Restore option that lets you undo any changes you make.



UPDATED | New tweaks and fixes for your favourite programs



DISK DEFRAGMENTER

IObit Smart Defrag 3.3.0

www.iobit.com

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8+
File size: 12.7MB

This powerful free tool can defrag and optimise your hard drive(s), intelligently moving frequently used files to the fastest areas of the drive, where they can be accessed more quickly. The updated version supports virtual hard drives and improves defragging of Windows 8 apps.



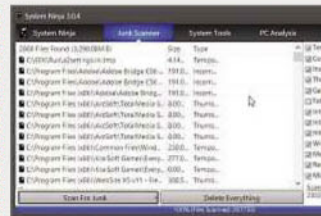
SYSTEM TOOL

Baidu PC Faster 5.04

www.pcfaster.com

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8+
File size: 21.7MB

Despite the tiny increase in the version number, this is a big update to Baidu's free PC optimisation, clean-up and maintenance suite. It offers a better design, improved performance, more than 300 cleaning checkpoints and a more powerful Wi-Fi Hotspot feature, with extra tools such as device recognition and traffic statistics.



JUNK CLEANER

System Ninja 3.0.4

singularlabs.com

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8+
File size: 2.5MB

System Ninja removes junk from your PC, including temporary files, internet cookies and history, thumbnail caches and more. This update fixes various bugs, improves the system-analysis tool, adds more item descriptions to the Startup Manager and introduces a redesigned scanning engine for better stability.



SYSTEM TOOL

ChrisPC Win Experience Index 3

www.chris-pc.com

Min requirements: Windows Vista/7/8+
File size: 1.3MB

This program restores the Windows Experience Index (WEI) that Microsoft removed from Windows 8.1. It rates the various system components and gives you an overall score. Version 3.0 adds support for the Windows 10 Technical Preview and applies various fixes.

GET FREE SOFTWARE FIRST subscribe to Web User at subscribe.webuser.co.uk



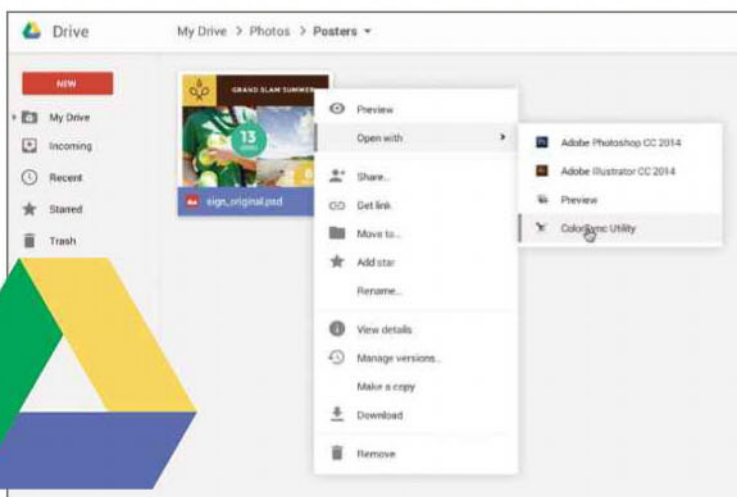
Best New Browser Tools



CHROME

Open Google Drive files in Desktop programs

Google Drive lets you open files in your browser using web apps such as Docs and Sheets, but it's often no substitute for the full range of features offered by a Desktop program. To get the best of both worlds, install the new Chrome extension Application Launcher for Drive (bit.ly/drive359). This expands the 'Open with' menu in Google Drive so you can launch files stored in your account in the Desktop software of your choice. For example, you can open PDF files in Adobe Reader, photos in your preferred image editor and MP3s in a dedicated music player. If a compatible program isn't already open on your computer, Chrome will launch it for you. Note that you'll first need to sync your files using the latest version of the Google Drive app for PC and Mac to make the most of this new feature.



Display Chrome tabs down the side of the page

The default layout for all browsers is to display tabs across the top, but if you'd prefer to have them down the side in



Chrome, you can install the new add-on vTabs (bit.ly/vtabs359). This shows your tabs vertically,

as well as horizontally, in a sidebar that appears when you drag your mouse to the left of the window (you can also choose to keep it there permanently). You can customise vTabs with five different themes, including dark, classic and simple blue (pictured); save tabs to read later; and open your bookmarks and recently closed tabs directly from the vertical panel.

Encrypt your emails and social-media posts

If you're worried that hackers and government spies could be reading your webmail messages and social-media posts, you can use ShadowCrypt (bit.ly/shadow359) to encrypt their content. So secretive that it doesn't have a



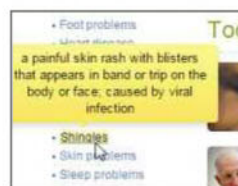
description or any screenshots on its Chrome Web Store page, this add-on disguises what you write on Facebook, Twitter and Gmail, so that only someone else with ShadowCrypt installed can decrypt and read it. Go into the extension's Options to create encryption keys for additional sites, which will be indicated by padlock symbols in the text-input boxes. You can toggle encryption on and off by clicking the padlock or by pressing Ctrl+Space.

Translate medical jargon on web pages

Looking for medical advice online can leave you feeling more confused than reassured, especially when you don't understand the terms used to describe a condition. Medical Translator by Iodine.com (bit.ly/medical359) makes things clearer by highlighting medical jargon on sites such as Wikipedia, Patient.co.uk and Boots WebMD. Hover your mouse over a highlighted term to see a pop-up explanation of what it means, for example 'arrhythmia' for

'arrhythmia'.

Not all medical terms are currently highlighted, but you can notify the Iodine.com team if you spot one that should be added to the dictionary.



Bring Christmas cheer to every site you visit

Make Chrome look more Christmassy by installing the tacky but entertaining extension Christmasfy (bit.ly/christmasfy359). At the click of a button, this transforms every web page you visit into a winter wonderland, complete with falling snowflakes, dancing Santas and Christmas music. Keep clicking your screen to ramp up the festive cheer or reload the page to wrap it up for the day.



This fortnight's most useful tips and add-ons to help you get the most from Chrome, Firefox, Internet Explorer and more



FIREFOX

Delete only your most recent browsing history

The Private Browsing mode in Firefox stops your history and cookies from being stored, but you need to manually switch to it *before* you start browsing. The new Forget option in Firefox 33.1 covers your tracks retrospectively in a couple of clicks, rather than having to go to Tools, Options, Privacy, 'clear your recent history'. To enable the Forget feature, click the Settings menu in the top-right corner, select Customize and drag the Forget icon to your Bookmarks bar. Click the new toolbar button and you can delete your browsing history and cookies for the last five minutes, two hours or 24 hours. This will also close all open tabs and windows, and can't be undone – so think carefully before clicking Forget!



Set DuckDuckGo as your default search engine

Another new feature in Firefox 33.1 adds the marvellous DuckDuckGo (duckduckgo.com) to the browser's built-in search engines. Previously, you needed to add it yourself by visiting the DuckDuckGo website and selecting 'Use in Firefox'. Unlike Google, DuckDuckGo doesn't store details of your searches or track you online, so it helps protect your privacy on the web.

To set DuckDuckGo as your default search engine in Firefox, simply click the



arrow on the left-hand side of the search box and select it from the

list. If you search from the address bar, type `about: config` into the bar, search for the entry 'keyword.url', then double-click it and enter `https://duckduckgo.com`.

Open a random bookmark or history entry

If you can't make up your mind as to which web page you should visit next, why not let Random Bookmark (bit.ly/random359) decide for you? Just click the add-on's toolbar button to open a



randomly selected site from your Bookmarks folder. Alternatively, click the arrow next to the button

and choose History to revisit a random page you've been to recently, or pick Combined to select from both Bookmarks and History. You can customise the toolbar icon in the add-on's Settings. It's a fun way to rediscover interesting sites you saved and promptly forgot about.

Add a calculator to Firefox

If you need to perform some quick sums as you browse the web, Easy Calc (bit.ly/easycalc359) lets you launch a full-featured calculator directly from the Firefox toolbar. As well as standard arithmetical tools for adding, subtracting, multiplying and dividing, there are options to work out cube roots and logarithms, should the need arise.



OTHER BROWSERS

Access Google Calendar from Opera

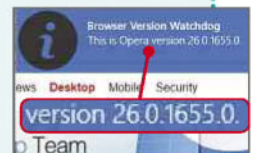
If you use Google Calendar to keep on top of appointments and events, then the (unofficial) Opera add-on of the same name (bit.ly/calendar359) is a must.

This Google Calendar extension lets you add new events to your calendar and check existing ones directly from the browser toolbar. It shows the number of active events within a set time frame, and you can adjust the height and width of the pop-up calendar, and switch from day to month view (and vice versa) as required. The add-on uses RSS technology to ensure it's always up to date, and lists all the events in your calendar on its Options page.



Get alerted when Opera is updated

Browsers usually update automatically, in the background, so you don't need to worry about manually downloading the latest version. However, they're now updated so frequently that it's easy to forget which version you're using, unless you check the browser's About page. Browser Update Watchdog (bit.ly/watchdog359) makes things easier in Opera by alerting you as soon as the browser is updated, and displaying the exact version number. Click the 'i' icon to view more information about the edition of Opera you're using.



See our 'Update everything automatically' feature on page 48 for more about updating your browser and other software.

Best Free Apps

App of the Fortnight

TRAVEL

Minube

bit.ly/minube359

Min requirements: Android 4, iOS 7

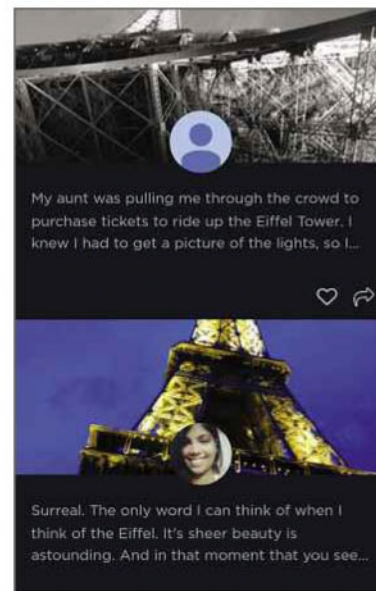
Size: 17MB

Minube is a travel app with a twist. As well as letting you search for hotels, restaurants and things to do in thousands of destinations around the world, the app helps you organise your photos after a trip by identifying where they were taken. Then, if there's a picture you're particularly proud of, you can publish it along with any tips you think might be of help to other people visiting the area. This feature gives the app a particularly personal touch and we liked being able to read the real-life experiences of fellow tourists.

Although it is easy to

UPDATED

search for destinations by name, the app also has an excellent Inspiration feature if you're struggling to decide where to go. Filter your destinations by distance, continent, length of trip and even colour and Minube will present you with a list of suitable cities and towns. We would have loved to have seen a price-range filter too, but with so many factors (including flights) affecting this, we're probably expecting too much. We really enjoyed using Minube and since the information it offers is crowdsourced, it should only improve as it grows in popularity!



Our rating



BUSINESS

Primer

bit.ly/primer359

Min requirements: iOS 7

Size: 15.4MB

Developed by Google, Primer helps people with start-up businesses learn important marketing concepts directly from their phone or tablet. The app includes free lessons on Content Marketing, PR & Media and Search Advertising. Each lesson comes with a combination of case studies, tips and interactive quizzes to help you get to grips with the most important strategies. The app is very well designed and we found the information clear, concise and easily digestible. The lessons are also available offline, making Primer perfect for learning important marketing principles, even when you're on the move and have no internet connection. The app is currently only available on iOS, but it will be coming to Android soon.



Our rating



SOCIAL

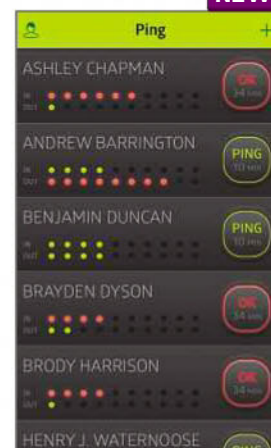
Ping

bit.ly/ping359

Min requirements: iOS 7

Size: 18MB

According to its developers, "Ping is the simple way to stay in touch without words". Whether you simply want to get a friend's attention or just let them know that you got home safely, you can do so by sending them a Ping. It's a great idea if you're a person of few words, or you don't like sending and reading messages on a small screen. Ping will also appeal to anyone with worries about privacy, because there's no risk of your personal information being intercepted. With a bit of creativity, the Pings you send can have whatever value you ascribe to them!



Our rating



This fortnight's top free and paid-for apps for Android, iOS and Windows phones and tablets, and smart TVs

EMAIL

Gmail

bit.ly/gmail359

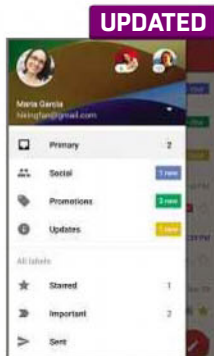
Min requirements:

Android (varies with device)

Size: Varies with device

Following the recent launch of its email tool, Google Inbox, Google has also made significant updates to the Gmail app for Android. Along with a colourful new interface to bring it in line with Android Lollipop's Material design, Gmail 5 now supports third-party email accounts for the first time. It's compatible with POP and IMAP, which means you can use it in conjunction with Yahoo Mail, Outlook .com and most other webmail services. However, contrary to some reports we read, we found no support for Exchange.

Hopefully, this functionality will be added in the near future.



Our rating



PRODUCTIVITY

Microsoft Word

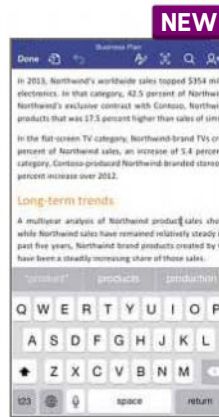
bit.ly/word359

Min requirements:

iOS 7.1

Size: 265MB

When Office for iPad was released in March 2014, it let you download Word, Excel and PowerPoint for free, but unless you bought a subscription to Office 365, you could only view your files and not edit them. Now, however, Microsoft has made it possible to edit and create documents from your iPad for free. Some advanced editing features are still only available if you subscribe to Office 365, but Word offers OneDrive and Dropbox integration, and it's available as a separate app on the iPhone for the first time, too.



Our rating



APPS IN BRIEF

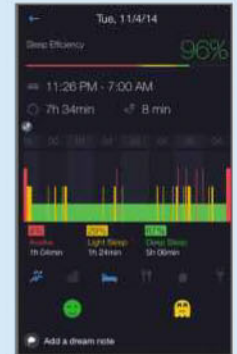
Sleep Better

bit.ly/sleepbetter359

Min requirements: iOS 7

Size: 38.3MB

From the developers of Runtastic, Sleep Better claims to improve the quality of your sleep by tracking your sleep cycles and letting you measure them against daily habits and other variables, including caffeine and alcohol consumption, and exercise and stress levels. Like many other apps of this kind, Sleep Better also has a Smart Alarm, which measures your movements in order to wake you up at the optimum time, during a light phase of sleep.



BROWSERS

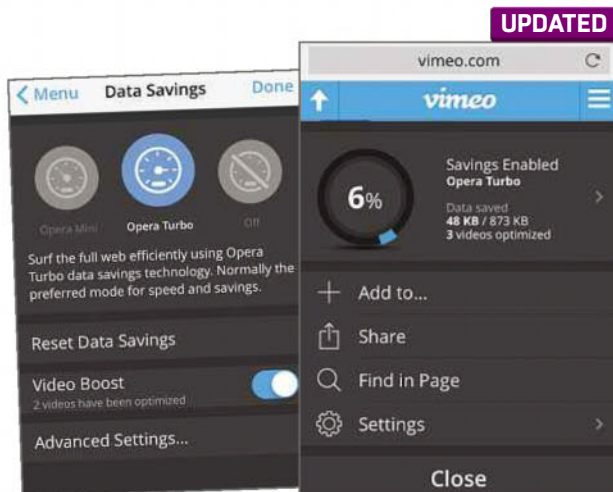
Opera Mini

bit.ly/opera359

Min requirements: iOS 7

Size: 17.2MB

Following the introduction of its 'Turbo' browsing mode, which cuts your mobile data usage by up to 90 per cent, we made Opera Mini for iOS our App of the Fortnight in issue 349 (bit.ly/webuser349). Now the browser has been upgraded again to bring you 'Video boost' - a feature that further cuts the amount of data you download by optimising videos before you watch them. It can be activated in Turbo mode simply by flicking the switch next to Video Boost, after which the browser keeps track of the number of videos it has optimised. With most mobile networks offering fairly conservative data allowances to their customers, this is an incredibly useful feature for those who like to stream video when they are on the move. Not only will you get more out of your data allowance, but Video Boost will also reduce the amount of time you waste waiting for videos to load.



Our rating



Sky+

bit.ly/skyapp359

Min requirements: Android 2.2, iOS 5

Size: 12MB

This brilliant app lets you check the week's TV schedule and record programmes to your Sky+ box when you're out and about. It also has built-in features to help you discover Sky's best catch-up TV and on-demand shows. At home, you can use it to manage all the recordings in your TV planner. The latest version of the app lets you cast photos from your phone or tablet to a set-top box, and record whole series at the touch of a button.



SPEED TOOL

Speed Booster

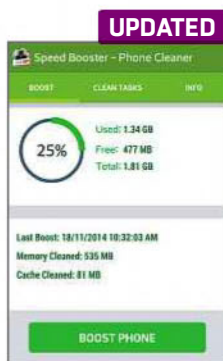
bit.ly/speed359

Min requirements: Android 2.3

Size: 2.6MB

Speed Booster claims to speed up your phone by 60 per cent with a single touch of a button. It achieves this by killing processes, cleaning memory and clearing cached data that's taking up valuable space on your phone.

Although it's a handy app if you want a quick, easy fix, Speed Booster will only provide temporary respite if you've got a chronically sluggish phone. Furthermore, you'll almost certainly be put off by its never-ending pop-up adverts. Despite this, the app's Clean Tasks menu is a handy way of checking how much memory and processing power each app is using, so you can identify anything that is hogging more than its fair share of your phone's resources.



Our rating



PRINTING

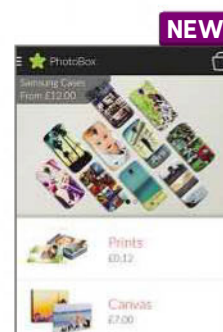
Photobox Photo Prints & Gifts

bit.ly/photo359

Min requirements: Android 4

Size: 18MB

Photobox's printing services have been available to iOS users for a while and now Android users can also order photographic prints directly from their phones or tablets. The Photobox app lets you import your snaps directly from your device or upload them from Facebook, Instagram and Dropbox. As well as traditional prints, you can order personalised canvases, mugs, phone cases, posters and t-shirts, and the company offers a no-quibble refund if you're not entirely satisfied with your product. Payment is easy and secure, and once you've placed an order you can track it using the app. When you sign up with Photobox, you're also given 40 free photo prints and unlimited storage, so what's not to like?



Our rating



5 NEW APPS WORTH PAYING FOR

MUSIC

Hype Machine

bit.ly/hype359

Min requirements: Android 2.2

Size: 4.1MB **Price:** £2.50

New to Android, Hype Machine helps you discover great new music by offering handpicked highlights from more than 800 music blogs. Once you've bought the app, there are no further fees or adverts, so you're free to stream any of the tracks on offer.



PHOTOGRAPHY

Pro Shot

bit.ly/proshot359

Min requirements: Windows Phone 8

Size: 4MB **Price:** £1.69

If you bought a Windows Phone because you're serious about photography, you'll love ProShot. As well as offering advanced settings that let you change your shutter speed, ISO and white balance, the app includes burst shot, self-timer and timelapse modes.



SPORT

Coach's Eye

bit.ly/coach359

Min requirements: Windows Phone 8.1

Size: 5MB **Price:** £3.49

If you don't want to spend a fortune on

lessons to improve your golf swing, why not try using Coach's Eye? New to Windows Phone, the app lets you record, compare and analyse videos to help you improve all kinds of sporting techniques.

GAME

Football Chairman

bit.ly/football359

Min requirements: Android 2.3.3, iOS 5

Size: 7.7MB **Price:** £2.99

This highly addictive game, which sees you develop a football club from scratch, has been updated to include new challenges such as 'Fans are the boss', in which you can be fired by the fans if you don't perform well enough.



TOOL

MindNode

bit.ly/mind359

Min requirements: iOS 8

Size: 6.2MB

Price: £6.99

It might not be cheap, but MindNode is a fantastic tool if you need to create mind maps (visual representations of ideas) from your phone or tablet. Its never-ending canvas and auto-rearrange feature mean you'll never run out of space.



Hype Machine



Pro Shot



Coach's Eye



Football Chairman



MindNode





Best New TV Apps

TV

BBC iPlayer on YouView

www.youview.com**Min requirements:** YouView box**Size:** N/A

Following the addition of Netflix, which we covered in our last issue, the latest improvement to YouView is a major update to its iPlayer app. This has a redesigned interface that makes TV shows and films easier to find, and adds new content categories for documentaries, food, arts and history, and science and nature. Press the red button on your YouView remote while watching any BBC channel to bring up a new home screen that gives you access to iPlayer as well as BBC Sport and BBC News apps. These let you stream live sporting events, watch recent news bulletins and view a local weather forecast. The updated app is already available on Humax and BT YouView boxes, and will be coming to TalkTalk devices "in due course".



GAMES

Chromecast games

chromecast.com/apps**Min requirements:** Chromecast**Size:** Varies

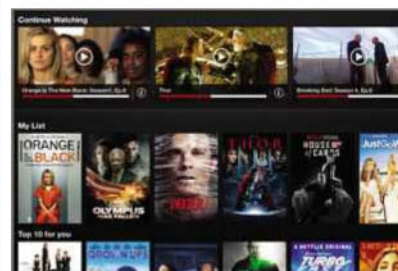
Just when you thought Google's streaming device couldn't get any better, Chromecast has added more than half a dozen family-friendly games. You can play these on your TV screen and control them using your phone or tablet, which saves you digging out old board games on Christmas Day. The apps include versions of old favourites such as Monopoly, Scrabble and Connect 4, as well as the trivia game Big Web Quiz, which lets you pit your knowledge against up to five friends. If you're feeling energetic, there's Just Dance Now, which turns movements you make with your mobile device into onscreen dance moves. Most of the apps are free to install and available for both Android and iOS, providing endless festive fun for the whole family.

FILM & TV

Netflix 7.0.1 for iOS

bit.ly/netflix359**Min requirements:** iOS 7**Size:** 19MB

The new version of the Netflix app for iOS makes the most of the iPhone 6 Plus's 5.5in screen by introducing support for video playback at the 'full HD' resolution of 1,080p. If you own a standard iPhone 6 or earlier model, your screen won't support 1,080p so you're stuck with 720p resolution. However, the updated app also offers a redesigned interface that's optimised for iOS 8 and displays more information onscreen as you browse Netflix films and TV shows. Because streaming at the highest resolution uses up a lot more bandwidth – as much as 5Mbps for 1,080p – you should only do so over Wi-Fi. Netflix hasn't confirmed when its Android app will be updated.

 Don't install...

Hot Deals Now UK

bit.ly/hotdeals359

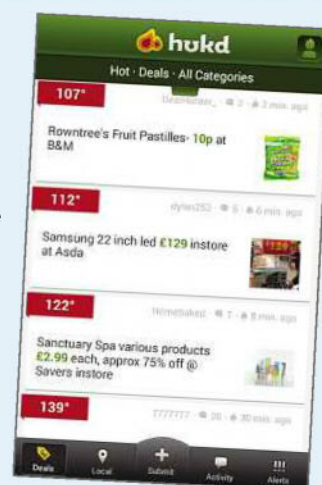
This unofficial app sources info from the popular money-saving community HotUKDeals, but it's ugly and annoying. The interface is dominated by adverts and flame icons that drift down your screen for no reason. You have to tap a blue arrow to download the latest discounts in every category and, rather than the deals opening within the app, tapping them simply takes you to the mobile version of the HotUKDeals site. Pointless rubbish.

...Install this instead

HotUKDeals

bit.ly/hotandroid359**Min requirements:** Android (varies with device), iOS 5**Size:** 8.4MB

The official HotUKDeals app is an absolute must for bargain hunters, especially in the run-up to Christmas and the January sales. As well as listing the 'hottest' online and offline deals from the HotUKDeals website, it has a brilliant Local feature for finding discounts when you're out and about. This automatically detects your location to present you with a list of in-store price-reductions nearby, on everything from groceries and clothes to technology and entertainment. You can set up alerts containing specific keywords to be notified when matching offers appear on HotUKDeals, and share bargains you spot with other members directly from the app.





Instant Expert

Our guide to Amazon Echo

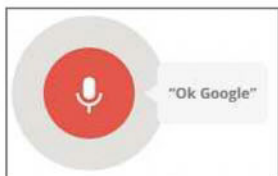
This voice-controlled personal assistant is Amazon's most innovative product in years. **David Crookes** explains how Echo could change your life

What is Echo?

Amazon Echo is a 9in cylindrical, black speaker that includes a set of always-on microphones. Designed to be placed in any room of your house, it connects to the internet and constantly listens out for instructions, so it can carry out your voice commands, answer questions and play music on demand.

Is it a digital personal assistant?

Yes. Amazon Echo undoubtedly takes its lead from the likes of Apple's Siri (www.apple.com/uk/ios/siri), Google's OK Google (bit.ly/okgoogle359) and Cortana



Echo works in a similar way to tools such as OK Google

on the Windows Phone (bit.ly/cortana359). You can give Echo similar instructions but instead of displaying the results on a screen, the device voices them through its speaker.

How does it work?

To activate Echo, you utter a 'wake-up' word which, by default, is 'Alexa' (this can, apparently, be changed). Once Echo hears the word 'Alexa', it will listen out for the subsequent string of spoken words and act on them. For example, if you say, "Alexa, play Elvis Presley playlist", Echo will 'wake up', listen to the immediate instruction, process it, act on it and then, presumably, close its digital ears again.

So Alexa is the actual name of the assistant?

Yes, and it's likely that she won't be confined to Echo. Alexa will be available via mobile apps and desktop computers, and we fully expect her to become



Echo provides entertainment and information for the whole family

integral to many Amazon products if Echo proves successful.

What can I get Echo to do?

The Echo page on Amazon's website (www.amazon.com/oc/echo) suggests a variety of questions such as "will it rain tomorrow?" and "how many teaspoons are in a tablespoon?". Echo also lets you set an alarm, create lists, find information from Wikipedia, activate music playlists, hear news and sports reports and search the web. A fun promotional video shows it telling jokes, too (bit.ly/echo359).

Where does Echo get its information from?

Echo connects to the cloud via Wi-Fi or Bluetooth, and runs on the Amazon Web Services platform. When processing a question, it seeks answers from the web. It remains to be seen how fast Echo will

respond over slow connections, but there should be no more lag than with existing digital personal assistants.

Are there worries about privacy?

Concerns have been raised over the "always-on" connection, and the questions you ask will be stored on Amazon's servers unless you request that they're deleted. There is also the risk that hackers could find a way to access the device so that the microphones are processing 24 hours a day. However, there were similar worries about the motion- and audio-detecting abilities of the Xbox Kinect (www.xbox.com/en-GB/Kinect), which have so far proved unfounded.

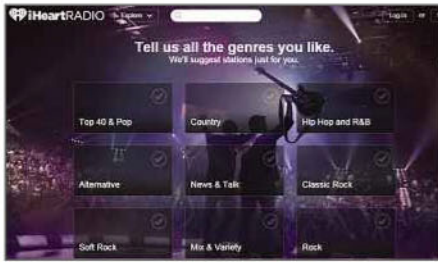


Privacy fears about the Kinect have never become real

Which music service will it use?

As you'd expect, Echo uses the Amazon Music Library, as well as Prime Music, TuneIn (tunein.com) and iHeart Radio (www.iheart.com). Given the rivalry between Amazon, Apple and Google in the digital-music market, it's actually





Echo will stream music from services such as iHeart Radio

quite surprising that Echo will work with third-party services, letting you stream songs from other music providers, including iTunes, Spotify and Pandora, from your smartphone or tablet.

If it's playing music, how will it hear me?

The device has a noise-cancellation feature so if you give it an instruction while music is playing, it will still be able to hear you. It seems there is no need to shout, either: Amazon says that the seven built-in microphones allow voices to be heard from any direction and that Echo is sensitive enough for you to talk to it at normal volume.

How good is the sound quality?

Amazon says the 360-degree omni-directional audio speaker has been "expertly tuned" and

The Echo's speaker, woofer and tweeter deliver high-quality audio



claims it fills rooms with an "immersive sound". It has a 2.5in woofer that's said to deliver a deep bass response and there is a reflex port to enhance the woofer's output, reducing distortion. Additionally, Echo has a 2in 'tweeter' to "crisply hit the high notes".

Will it recognise my accent?

Voice-recognition devices have in the past struggled to recognise certain accents. The Nintendo DS had problems with Scottish accents and the Brain Training game in particular seemed to stumble on a Northern pronunciation of "yellow", which the BBC's *Watchdog* programme highlighted (bit.ly/yellow359). But voice recognition has come on in leaps and bounds since then, and the more you use Echo, the more it will learn your vocabulary, speech patterns and personal preferences.

Doesn't it have a screen?

Echo won't have its own screen, but Amazon says there will be an Echo app for its own Fire OS (the operating system that works with the Amazon range of Fire devices) and Android. It seems there won't be an iOS app, but Echo will be controllable from within the Safari browser of an iPhone or iPad. You'll also be able to use a Desktop browser to manage lists, alarms, music and more.



You'll be able to control Echo using an app on your phone or tablet

When will it be available?

It is not yet known when – or even if – Echo will be released in the UK, but it's already being advertised in the US, with anyone interested being asked to request an invitation (which is possibly a wheeze to make the product appear exclusive for early adopters). Amazon has had a mixed reception to some of its more recent products, such as the Fire Phone, so it may well be that it wants to properly test how receptive US consumers are before launching it worldwide.

How much will it cost?

In the US, Amazon Prime members are being offered Echo for \$99 (£62.65) for a limited time. Non-members will be charged \$199 (£130). No UK details have been confirmed regarding cost but, considering that a Fire HD 6in tablet costs \$99 from Amazon.com and £79 in the UK, we would be hoping for a £79 introductory price for Prime members (www.amazon.co.uk/gp/prime) over here.

HOW COULD ECHO USE YOUR DATA?

It's reasonable to assume that Amazon will be getting more from Echo than expanding its product portfolio. Here are a few possibilities for developing the device



Increased profits

Although the emphasis today is on answering questions, building lists and playing music, having a voice-activated hub takes away the barrier between consumers and Amazon's shops. You'll only have to say something like "Alexa, buy me the latest Hollywood film on DVD" and it will be packaged and shipped within hours.

Data mining

Echo could feasibly amass a lot of data about its users by analysing the requests they make. The potential is vast, with voices able to give away a person's age range, gender and mood. And by picking up on shopping habits and the types of questions it is asked, Echo can build up full profiles of people.



Connected homes

Echo could be seen as the beginning of Amazon's drive towards the Internet of Things. Voice activation is already built into phones, TVs and games consoles, but it's possible that the Alexa assistant could appear on your fridge, toaster, central heating system, doors and other items around your home.

RECORD ALL VIDEO & RADIO

FROM THE WEB

**COVER
FEATURE**

You don't need to tune in 'live' to enjoy radio and TV shows. **Wayne Williams** reveals how to record audio and video streams so you can enjoy them offline at your leisure



Back in Issue 355 (bit.ly/webuser355), we looked at the best new ways to download web TV, so you can watch your favourite shows when and where you want. But not all television and radio shows are made available through on-demand services, or if they are, they are frequently only offered for a limited time. This means that if you miss something when it's first broadcast, you might never get the chance to watch or hear it.

Fortunately, there are plenty of free and easy ways to capture streaming audio and video on your PC and mobile devices, so you can keep the content to play forever, even when you lose your internet connection.

In this feature, we explain how to record web-radio streams, save radio broadcasts on Android, record BBC radio shows, capture live TV broadcasts and more. But first, we look at the legalities of recording streaming media.

Recording from the web FAQ

Is it legal to record streaming TV and radio?

The short answer is yes. There's nothing in UK law to stop you doing this for personal use, although the site you're streaming from may prohibit capturing its content under its terms and conditions. For example, the music-sharing service SoundCloud (soundcloud.com, pictured below) lets you download tracks so long as the artist allows it and you do so using one of the site's own tools (rather than one from a third party).

SoundCloud also expressly states: "You must not copy, rip or capture, or attempt to copy, rip or capture, any audio content from the platform or any part of the platform, other than by means of download in circumstances where the relevant uploader has elected to permit downloads of the relevant item of content". SoundCloud makes it clear that if you breach these terms, it is within its rights to terminate your account and could also take court action against you, should it choose to. In reality, it's unlikely to do this, unless you're a serial offender, but it's worth being aware of the warning if you're thinking of ripping music from the site.

If you're recording live TV programmes or radio shows from the web, you need a TV licence. The law is



very clear on this. You don't need a licence to watch catch-up TV, but you do for watching or recording live broadcasts. This relates to all UK broadcasters, not just the BBC.

Are you allowed to share your recordings?

No, not really. UK copyright law has a time-shifting exception that lets you make a copy of a broadcast provided you do so in your own home; you copy from the original broadcast (meaning you shouldn't copy from someone else's copy, for example); and your reason for doing so is to view or listen to the broadcast at a more convenient time. The time-shifting exception does not allow you to share the copy with other people, or to upload it for them to then download.

It's obviously completely illegal to sell copies of recordings you make of other people's work. The law may not actually

recordings on to friends and family, so long as the recipients don't do anything dodgy with them or try to profit from the recordings financially.

What is the difference between recording and downloading?

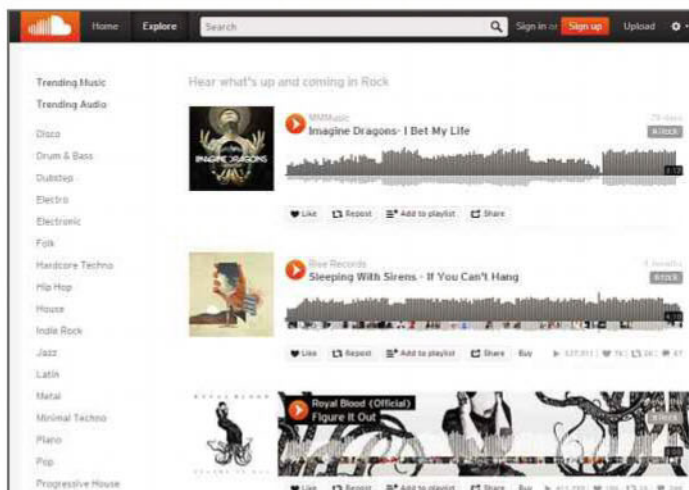
Under 'fair use' rules, if you record a song from the radio (including web radio), you are legally allowed to record that track for personal use. This is because the broadcaster has paid for the rights to play that song, so the artist, songwriter and record label have also been paid, which means everyone is happy.

If you download a song from a legal music service, such as iTunes, people also get paid. However, if you download the song from a website for free, without the copyright holder's permission, then no-one receives any payment, and the process is both morally wrong and illegal.

The lines can sometimes be blurred when it comes to recording and downloading something from a website, because the program you use to 'download' the content might in fact be recording a stream.

How long am I allowed to keep a recording?

Time shifting (or fair use) suggests you're recording a broadcast to listen to or watch at a more convenient time. That doesn't mean you can keep it forever. Having said that, there's no specified time limit – which is just as well, considering that many of us still have songs and TV shows on cassettes and video tapes from decades ago!



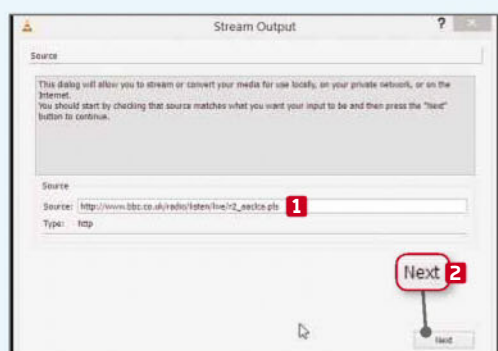


MINI WORKSHOP

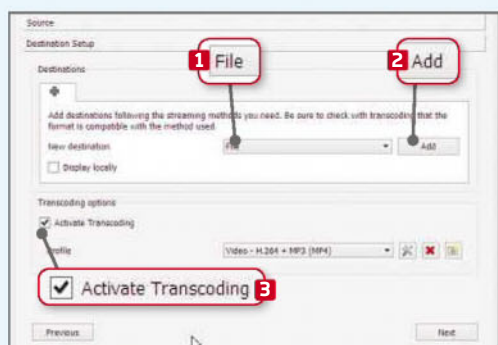
Record web radio using VLC Media Player



1 To listen to and record web radio through VLC Media Player, you'll need the URL of the radio station. There's a good list of stream addresses at www.listenlive.eu/uk.html. Copy the address of a station and, in VLC, click Media, **1** then go to Open Network Stream. Paste the URL into the address box. **2**



2 Click Play to start listening to your choice of radio station, which should begin streaming immediately. Go to Open Network Stream, click the down arrow next to the Play button and select Stream. The Stream Output box will open, showing your source. **1** Click the Next button. **2**



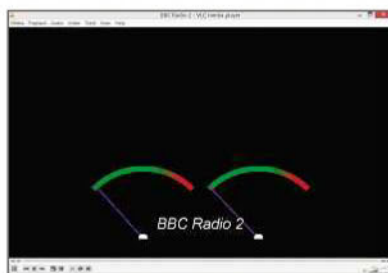
3 Under Destination Setup, make sure the New Destination is set as File **1** and then click Add. **2** Enter a name for the recording. You can specify a different save location. Untick Activate Transcoding **3** and click Next. Finally, click Stream. The counter will show the recording is in progress. Click Stop when it's done.

Record any audio from the web

Record web radio streams using VLC

The brilliant free program VLC Media Player (www.videolan.org) doesn't only play audio and video files stored on your hard drive; it can also play and record streaming content from the web. Provided you know the URL for the audio or video source, the software can stream it directly to your Desktop. For example, if you know the web address for a web radio station (it will probably end in '.m3u', or '.pls'), you can tune in through VLC without needing to visit the website. Best of all, you can easily download the stream in MP3 format to listen to offline at a time that's convenient to you.

See our Mini Workshop on the left to find out how to record web radio using VLC.



Record songs from the radio using StreamWriter

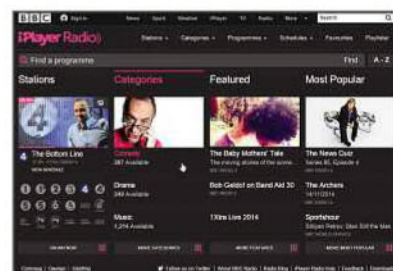
If you want to capture individual tracks rather than entire broadcasts, the superb tool StreamWriter (streamwriter.org/en) can record your favourite songs as they play on the web. You can either search for a track by name or browse a list of popular choices, and add your favourite tracks to a queue. The program will then monitor all the radio stations in its database and automatically record

the songs you've selected when they are found playing anywhere. It also lets you record selected radio stations and programmes.

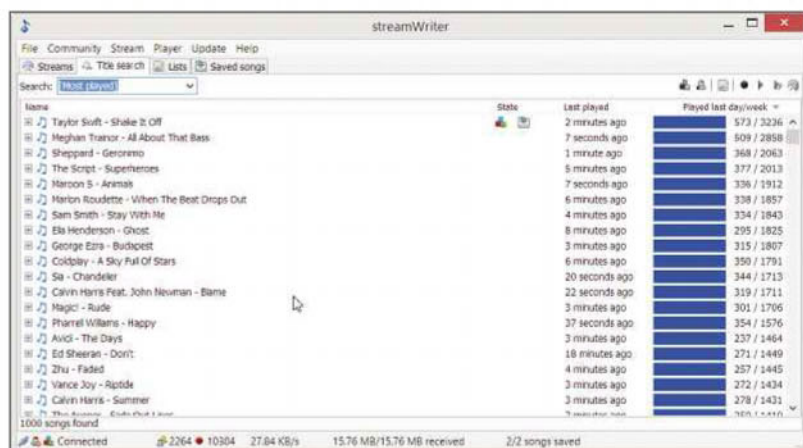
To listen to a recording in StreamWriter, simply click the Saved Songs tab, right-click a track and select Play. Sometimes the program will fail to record the full song to begin with, but if you leave it alone, it will eventually grab the entire track. You can limit the amount of bandwidth allocated to recordings to prevent StreamWriter from hogging your internet connection.

Record BBC radio shows

We've often recommended the excellent get_iplayer (squarepenguin.co.uk) for recording iPlayer television programmes, but the software can also record BBC radio, including live broadcasts and past shows, and export the audio in MP3 format. The BBC recently made changes to its feeds, so you can no longer search for a show by name, but you can search for a programme on iPlayer Radio (www.bbc.co.uk/radio) and use the details found there. You'll find full instructions on how to record BBC radio with get_iplayer at bit.ly/getiplayerguide359.



Alternatively, if it all seems too complicated (honestly, it isn't), you can use BBC Radio Recorder (bit.ly/



[bbcradiorecorder359](#)) instead. This tool, which you'll notice is actually called i-Sound Recorder when you download it, is much easier to use, and works very well, but the free version only lets you capture up to 100 seconds of radio. For unlimited recording, you'll need to buy the full edition for \$29.95 (£19.15).



Use Audacity to record audio as it plays

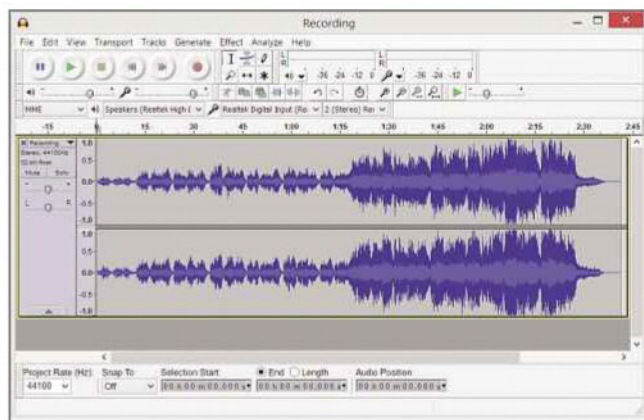
Audacity ([audacity.sourceforge.net](#)) is an excellent, free multi-track audio editor that you can use to record streaming content to your PC. To do this, you'll need a 3.5mm (male-to-male) audio cable and (optionally) a pair of headphones and a microphone splitter. Plug one end of the audio cable into

your soundcard's audio out (usually coloured green). Plug the other end into the microphone splitter, and the end of that into the line-in port (which is probably blue). Finally, plug your headphone jack into the spare port on the microphone splitter.

A simpler method (and the one to use if you don't have a microphone splitter) is to connect the audio cable to the audio out and line in. However, you won't be able to hear the streaming audio to prompt you to start recording.

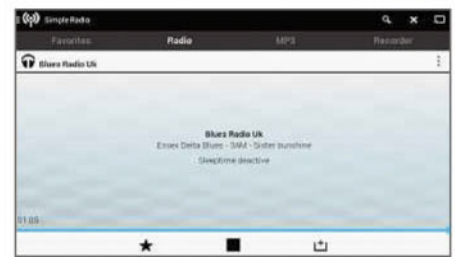
Once you've set up your cable connections, open Audacity and set the recording input to 'line-in' (the wording of this will vary depending on your set-up). Start your stream playing, then hit Audacity's Record button. You'll know that the broadcast recording is if you see a moving waveform.

You can pause and stop the recording at any time. To play it back, click Stop, then skip to the beginning of the track and hit Play. The file can be saved in WAV format, or as an MP3 if you install the LAME encoder from [lame1.buanzo.com.ar](#).



Record radio broadcasts on your Android device

The free app Simple Radio Recorder ([bit.ly/simpleradio359](#)) gives you access to thousands of online radio stations on your Android phone or tablet. To find something to listen to, just click the



magnifying glass and search by name. To record a show or song, go full screen and tap the Save button at the bottom. Agree to the terms, then give the recording a name. You'll be able to listen to your saved recordings under the MP3 tab. The app can automatically fetch cover art and save recordings to your device's SD card.

Record tracks from SoundCloud

As we mentioned in the legal Q&A on page 39, you're not allowed to use third-party programs to record music hosted on SoundCloud. However, if you want to take your chances anyway and promise to only keep songs for personal use, we can reveal that one of the best tools for the job is Apowersoft Free Online Audio Recorder ([bit.ly/apowersoft359](#)). This can record any audio stream, not only SoundCloud. Just start playing the track you want to capture and hit Record. It's very reliable and does a great job of recording streaming audio. See our Mini Workshop below to find out how to use it.



MINI WORKSHOP | Use Apowersoft's free software to record streaming audio



1 Download the program from [bit.ly/apowersoft359](#). There's a Desktop version, **1** but you probably won't need it. Click the Start Recording button **2** to initialise the Java applet. Java is known to be a little insecure so you may have to give your permission to let it run in your browser.



2 Once you've agreed to allow Java, Free Audio Recorder will load and open in a new window. It looks and behaves just like a regular program and is independent of your browser. Set an Output location, **1** then open a website with some streaming audio. Click the Start button **2** to begin capturing the sound.

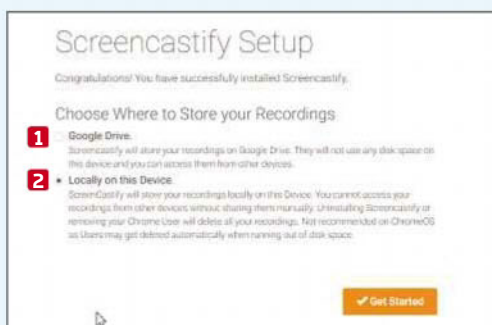


3 An animated graphic will show that the audio is recording, and you'll be able to see how much has been captured so far. **1** You can continue to listen to the audio as it records. Avoid doing anything with your PC that uses sound as that will be recorded, too. Click Stop **2** when it's done. Double-click a recording **3** to listen to it.

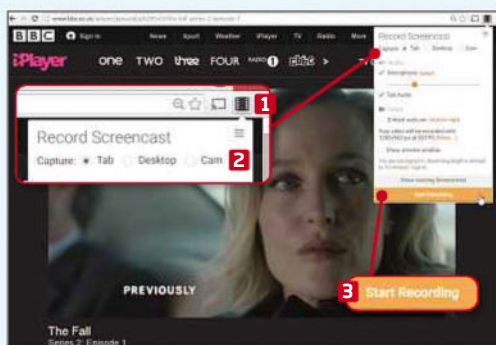


MINI WORKSHOP

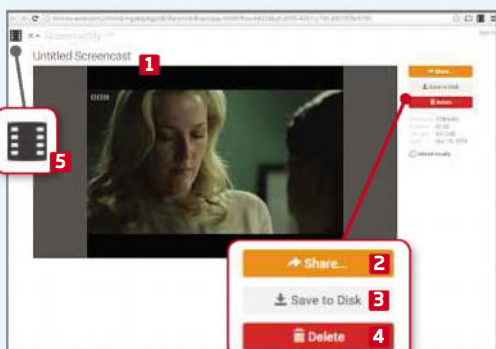
Record streaming video using Screencastify



1 When you install Screencastify, you'll be asked where you want to store your recordings. They can be saved to Google Drive **1** or locally on your PC. **2** Recording length is limited to 10 minutes in the free version. If you want longer, you can upgrade to the paid version for a one-off fee of €10.



2 Click the Get Started button and you'll be shown a video explaining how to use the add-on. Browse for something to watch in Chrome, then click the Screencastify button in the top-right corner of the browser. **1** Choose something you want to capture – either a tab, desktop, or webcam. **2** Click the Start Recording button. **3**



3 Recordings can be paused or stopped at any time. Once stopped, the capture will be played back. **1** You can share it on YouTube or Google Drive, **2** save it to disk **3** or delete it. **4** Click the menu button in the top-left corner **5** to view past screencasts you've saved and configure the add-on, for example, by setting where to save recordings.

Record any video from the web

Capture streaming video using Any Video Recorder

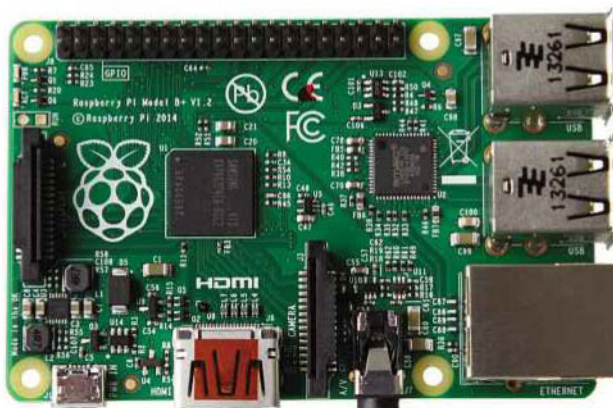
As its name suggests, Any Video Recorder (www.any-video-recorder.com) lets you record any video from the web, including content from streaming services such as YouTube, iPlayer, ITV Player and Netflix.

The program records exactly what's on screen, so you need to have the video window on top at all times. To use it, just click the Record Now button to make a red-framed window appear that you can move and resize to cover the video. Now click the Record button to start capturing the video. Recordings are saved in the popular MP4 format, which can be played in any media player.



Use Raspberry Pi to record live TV

Raspberry Pi (www.raspberrypi.org) is a computer the size of a credit card that costs from around £20. One of its best uses is for watching and recording live TV. To do this, you'll need a powered USB hub, a USB digital TV receiver and an external USB hard drive for storing your recorded TV programmes (it's possible to record programmes onto a SIM card, but you'll very quickly run out of space). The process is relatively simple and you'll find various how-to guides on the web. There's a particularly good one to follow at bit.ly/pipvr359.



Capture live broadcasts using CamStudio

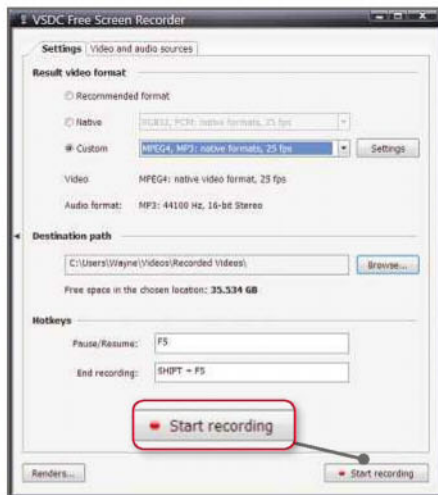
CamStudio (camstudio.org) can record all on-screen and audio activity on your PC and save it in AVI or SWF (Flash) formats. Like Any Video Recorder, you define the area to be captured by resizing a window over the top of the playing video. It can grab a region, a fixed region, a window or all screens. It provides plenty of video recording options, and lets you choose the type of codec, and the quality and frame rate. You can also configure the audio settings.



Record streaming video with VSDC Free Screen Recorder

Some recording tools aren't specifically intended to capture streaming content, but offer the feature almost incidentally. For example, VSDC Free Screen Recorder Software (bit.ly/VSDC359) is designed to let you capture your Desktop so you can create tutorials and presentations, but it can also record video played in your browser. You can set the

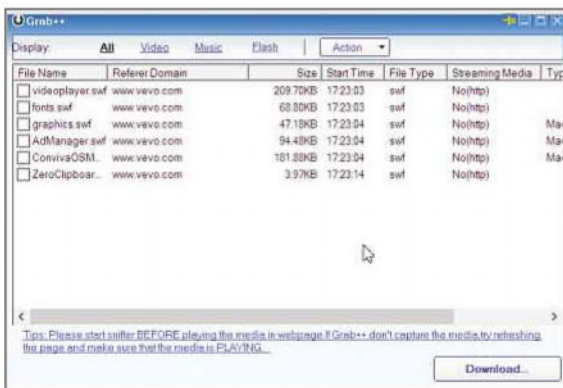
video and audio sources, and if you have a multi-monitor set-up, you can specify which of the screens you want to capture. You can choose the format to save the captured content in, and also set the frame rate. The



quality of VSDC's recorded video is usually very good.

Record streaming media using Orbit Downloader

Orbit Downloader (bit.ly/orbit359) can download streaming-only audio and video from a wide range of websites. Run the program and open it by double-clicking the System Tray icon. Go to Tools, Grab++. Make sure the "media sniffer" is monitoring your browser by clicking the Action button and selecting Preferences. Click the Monitoring tab and tick your browser choice. Open your browser and go to a site with streaming content. Start



playing a video (or music track). Content that can be saved to your hard drive will be listed in the Grab++ window. Select the item you want and click the Download button to start saving it.

There are two catches, though: firstly, Orbit Downloader can be very hit and miss – often it will fail to identify any streaming media, and you therefore won't be able to save it; and secondly, you must make sure you deselect any unwanted extras when you install it.

Record streaming video inside Chrome



If you'd prefer to capture streaming content without having to download any software, Screencastify (bit.ly/screencastify359) is a very useful Chrome add-on that lets you record a video of whatever's going on inside a browser tab. For example, if you're watching a video on a site such as YouTube, it can record it for you so you can watch it offline.

Screencastify can also record your entire Desktop, which is handy if you're watching streaming video inside a media player. Videos are saved in WebM's VP8 format with Ogg Vorbis audio and can be stored on your hard drive or saved to Google Drive.

See our Mini Workshop on the opposite page to find out how to use Screencastify. ■

What you say...



We asked *Web User* readers about the last radio or TV show they recorded from the web. Here's what you told us

The charts in 1991-92. I only knew pop music until then but broadened my horizons with all kinds of songs that littered the charts.

Ady Colclough

I think it must have been "Wooh!" Gary Davies and his 'Bit in the Middle' back in the Eighties.

Nicholas Davidson

The Robbie Vincent Soul Show on Radio 1.

Chris Jalloal

I once made a compilation of Simon Bates' 'Our Tune' sob stories, and gave it to a girl I fancied at school. She never spoke to me again.

Anthony Morris

I used to record 'I'm Sorry, I Haven't a Clue' from Radio 4.

Ethel Ethel

John Peel, because I could never stay awake late enough. Plus, recording it meant you could skip through the really weird stuff!

Mason Peters

The Shipping Forecast. So soothing!

George Berry

On Key 103, I used to record a hardcore show every week.

Wilkinson Chris

NEXT ISSUE

on sale Wednesday 17 December 2014

ESSENTIAL FREE SOFTWARE FOR 2015

We pick 10 of the most useful new programs for the coming year



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Best free music software

If you store your music on a Windows PC, there's lots of free software you can use to organise and play your tracks. **Andy Shaw** tests six of the best music-playing programs to see which one deserves to be trusted with your tunes



MusicBee | getmusicbee.com | ★★★★★
FEATURES ★★★★★ PERFORMANCE ★★★★★ EASE OF USE ★★★★★☆

What we liked:

MusicBee has only been around for six years, which makes it a relative newcomer compared to some of the other programs we've reviewed here (Windows Media Player, for example, first arrived in the multimedia version of Windows 3.0 back in 1991).

There's nothing particularly revolutionary about MusicBee but its refined, condensed interface does everything well. It comes with a wide range of skins, so you can get the software looking just how you like it. You can also add to, remove and rearrange its various windows.

MusicBee's flexible design also provides a variety of display options. There are two compact players, one of which provides a picture and background information related to the music you're listening to; and a locked-down jukebox version, so you can set

your playlist for a party and be certain that it won't get hijacked by one of your guests. Playlists are easy to create and add to, and if you have a lot of them, they can be organised into folders.

If you want to adjust the way your music sounds, there's a graphic equaliser, which you can fiddle with yourself or set to automatic. This EQ can look at the genre tag of the track you're listening to and arrange its sliders accordingly, to produce the sound most likely to suit that type of music. If your

PC is fitted with a high-end soundcard, you'll find MusicBee's advanced tools support many of its features. It can also use plug-ins, including some developed for other systems, such as Winamp.

How it can be improved:

We think the basic black-and-white skin that loads when you first launch the program is a real turn-off. If you decide to use MusicBee, go immediately to the View menu and choose a different skin before you start playing around with the program.

OUR VERDICT

MusicBee is a capable music player that you can customise to your tastes; it has a good range of skins, and its windows can be moved and rearranged. Most importantly, it's easy to use and has all the tools you could want for finding, organising and playing your tracks.



MediaMonkey | www.mediamonkey.com | ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★ PERFORMANCE ★★★★★ EASE OF USE ★★★★★

**WebUser
SILVER
AWARD**

What we liked:

MediaMonkey is an old *Web User* favourite that's still going strong. A wizard helps you get started with scanning your PC and importing music and playlists, and there are loads of add-ons to plug into the software, from additional codecs to extra features, though these can and have been created by anyone, so they vary in quality.

You can add and remove elements from the interface but it's not as flexible as MusicBee. The layout is arranged sensibly but it feels a bit old-fashioned, with long lists of tracks and small text making up most of the default view.

We liked that the software has lots of options, particularly its keyboard shortcuts. You can find a track and play it next with Shift+Ctrl+Enter, for example, or add it to the end of the queue with Ctrl+Enter.

The software doesn't automatically spring into action to find extras such as album art, but it does a good job when



you make a request, and even finds lyrics to display as a song plays.

How it can be improved:

MediaMonkey's paid-for version costs \$24.95 (£15.92), which means there are missing features in the free program and you get the occasional prod to remind you to upgrade.

OUR VERDICT

If you don't like iTunes and Windows Media Player, MediaMonkey is a good option, but its position as king of the music players has been usurped by MusicBee.

Apple iTunes | www.apple.com/uk/itunes | ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★ PERFORMANCE ★★★★★ EASE OF USE ★★★★★

**WebUser
BRONZE
AWARD**

What we liked:

Apple iTunes is often berated as a bloated behemoth but among its many annoyances you'll find sparks of genius – mostly in its interface. It has the cleanest, most uncluttered appearance of all the software reviewed here and stands out from programs that essentially just display lists of track titles.

The iTunes Albums view is one of our favourite methods of browsing through an extensive music collection. The way it uses the cover artwork as a tool for browsing and picks up the colour scheme from the artwork is typical of Apple's superior interface design.

The software includes most of the features that you'll find in the other programs, from CD-ripping to a graphic equaliser, though you may have to dig around to find them.

How it can be improved:

Its 100MB download size is gargantuan compared to the likes of MusicBee (15MB) and Foobar 2000 (4MB). Some



of this is down to the extra gubbins you need to manage iOS devices, which is worthless if you don't have one, while the rest deals with the iTunes Store and other paid-for services, which is just as annoying. To get album artwork, for example, you need to log into the iTunes store with an Apple ID.

OUR VERDICT

Once you've jumped through all its hoops, iTunes is a capable, attractive player, especially if you're syncing an iPhone, iPad or iPod. But if you haven't bought into Apple's hardware, it's a waste of space.

BEST OF THE REST

Winamp

www.winamp.com

Winamp hasn't been updated much since it transferred from AOL to Shoutcast, though a complete refresh is promised for 2015. The player's latest default skin is attractive and clear, though we found its buttons



too small. You can also choose to go back to some classic retro Winamp skins. We had trouble performing some tasks that ought to be simple, though, such as downloading album artwork.

Foobar 2000

www.foobar2000.org

The first time you start Foobar 2000 it asks you to configure how you want it to look. What it doesn't do is ask you where your music is stored, so you start with a blank screen and have to explore the import options yourself. It's small and portable, but we found it overly stripped back, and although it can be upgraded with plug-ins, it's missing too many basic tools by default.



Windows Media Player

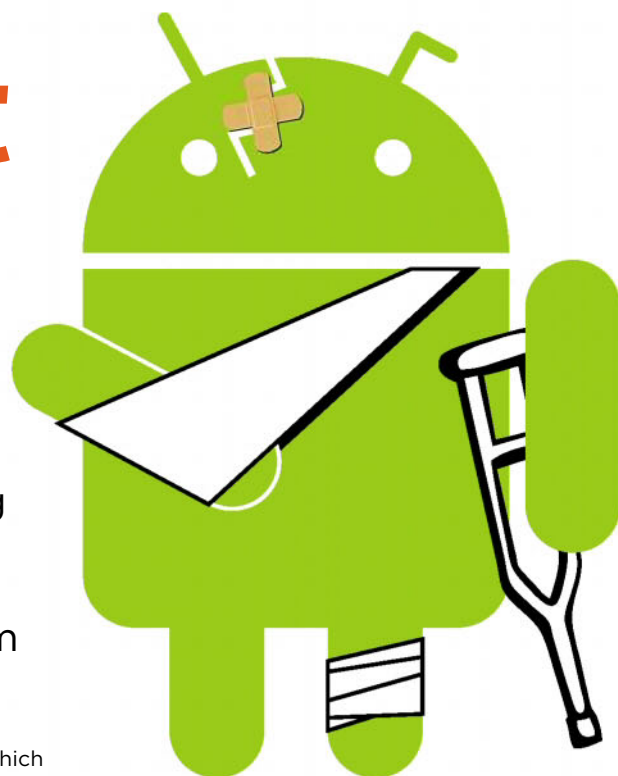
bit.ly/wmp359

Like Internet Explorer, the only thing really going for Media Player is that it comes free with Windows. It's an



ugly-looking player and the skins available are completely over-the-top. It will organise your music; rip and burn CDs; sync with compatible music players; and help stream music over your home network. Unfortunately, it doesn't perform any of these tasks particularly well.

Fix the worst Android problems

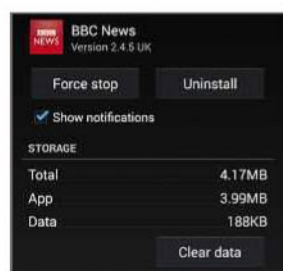


Poor battery life isn't the only frustrating aspect of Android phones and tablets.

Robert Irvine highlights six common annoyances and explains how to fix them

TOO MANY NOTIFICATIONS

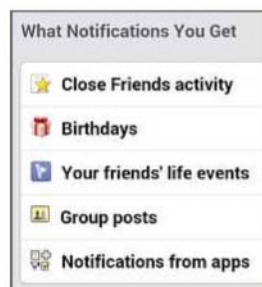
Although it's useful that your Android device alerts you when you get a new email, when a Facebook friend 'checks in' somewhere or when a calendar appointment is imminent, the cumulative effect of all these text and audio alerts can soon drive you potty.



The easiest way to stop notifications from a specific app on your phone or tablet is to go into

Settings, Apps, tap the offending app and untick 'Show notifications'.

Alternatively, if you want to receive certain alerts but not others, launch the app, tap its Settings menu and find Notification Settings (or similar) to review the individual notification

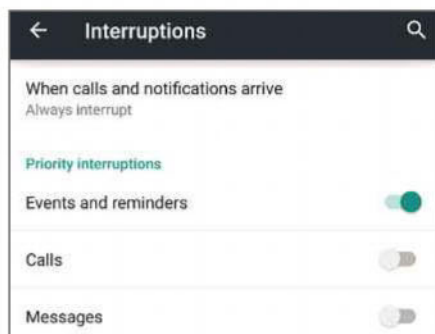


options. For example, in the Facebook app (left), you can turn off notifications for close friends' activities but still get alerts for their

birthdays. Some apps, especially messaging ones, also let you specify whether they should merely display a text notification, also make a sound (which you can choose from the default options) or make your device vibrate.

The new Android 5.0, otherwise known as Lollipop, introduces a handy

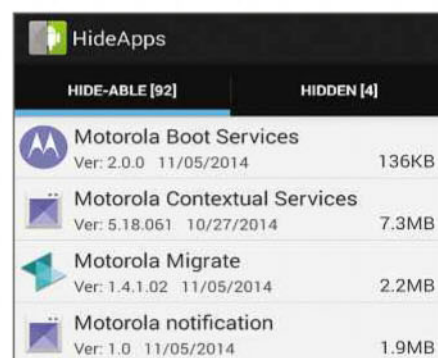
feature called Interruptions, which serves as a 'do not disturb' mode for notifications (and calls). You can set your device not to bother you between certain times of day, while making exceptions for 'priority interruptions' from selected contacts. It's ideal if you're in the habit of keeping your phone next to your bed and don't want to be woken at 3am by some idiot inviting you to play Candy Crush Saga.



PRE-INSTALLED BLOATWARE

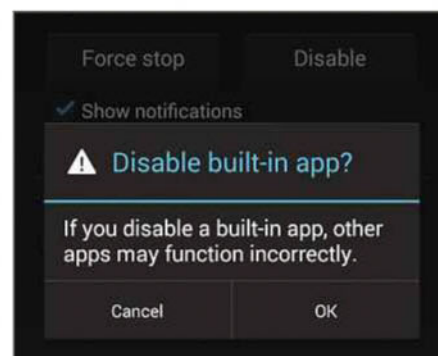
Most Android phones and tablets come with apps that have been pre-installed by Google, the manufacturer and/or the mobile network, many of which you will never use. They can sometimes be uninstalled in the usual way, but on devices from certain companies including Samsung, LG and Sony, they can't be removed unless you 'root' your phone or tablet. Since rooting invalidates your warranty and can leave your phone vulnerable to malware, or even render it completely unusable, it's a big risk to take.

A safer solution is to install the free app Disable Bloatware - Hide Apps (bit.ly/disable359). It doesn't require root access, but it lets you remove unwanted



apps from your app drawer and home screens by hiding rather than uninstalling them. Scroll through its list of 'hide-able' apps, then tap one you want to get rid of and choose Disable. Click OK to bypass the warning and OK again, if prompted, to replace the app with the factory version. The app will disappear from your screen. You can restore it again by tapping its name in the Hidden list and choosing Enable.

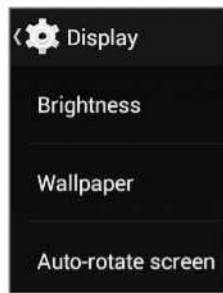
Pre-installed widgets and shortcuts are usually easier to remove, simply by swiping them off the edge of your screen.



AUTOMATIC SCREEN ROTATION

Some Android apps automatically switch your phone or tablet's screen from portrait to landscape mode, which makes sense when you're playing a game, watching a film or typing a document. But sometimes this forced rotation is more of a hindrance than a help, especially if your device is over-sensitive and keeps switching back and forth between modes.

You can stop this from happening by



turning off the auto-rotation feature on your device. Go to Settings, select Display and deselect the option 'Auto-rotate screen'. However, this is an all-or-nothing

setting that will stop the screen rotating even when you want it to.

A more flexible option is to install Smart Rotator (bit.ly/smart359), which controls the screen orientation for

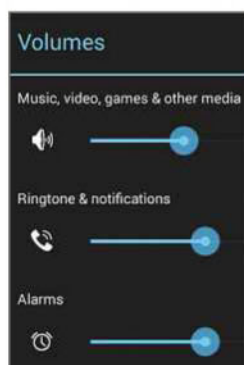


individual apps, so that some can rotate the display while others can't. Smart Rotator tells you the default orientation for every app installed on your device. Tap an app to change its auto-rotate setting from

Portrait to Landscape (or vice versa) or select Auto to let your screen adjust automatically.

SEPARATE VOLUME LEVELS

It can be tricky to manage the sound on your Android device when your ringtone, music player, games, notifications and alarm clock are all competing for your eardrums. Pressing the volume buttons on the side of your device only controls the general sound level, so to adjust individual settings, you need to go to Settings, Sound, Volumes. A better idea is to install a



widget that gives you instant access to all your volume controls in one place.

One of the best options is Volume Control Widget (bit.ly/volume359), which features separate slider bars for your alarm, multimedia apps, voice calls and ringtone. Drag them to the left or right to adjust their volumes and choose normal, vibrate or silent for your ringer (which also changes the settings for system sounds and notifications). This should prove especially useful when you upgrade to Android 5 Lollipop, which – for some reason – removes the silent mode from phones.



DATA-HUNGRY BACKGROUND APPS

Some Android apps, especially email, social-networking and messaging tools, continue to run in the background even when you're not using them, which consumes excess data, wastes memory and saps your battery life. You can stop this happening by going to Settings, 'Data usage', Settings and deselecting 'Auto-sync data', although this means you'll have to update the apps manually or you won't get any new content.

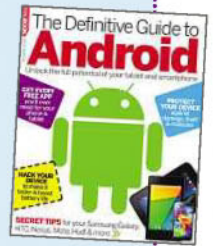
Alternatively, choose 'Restrict background data' and your apps will only sync when you're connected to a Wi-Fi network.



If those options sound too heavy-handed, you can still use the 'Data usage' page to find out which active apps are consuming the most data. Tap a greedy app and select 'Restrict background data' to prevent it from updating over your mobile network. You may also see a 'View app settings' button that gives further options for reducing data usage, such as setting how frequently an app should sync and

GET THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE TO ANDROID

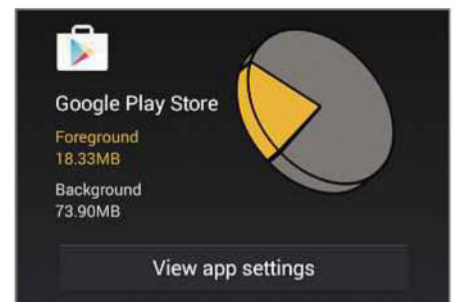
Our new Android MagBook is packed with 148 pages of workshops, tips and advice to help you unlock the full potential of your tablet and smartphone.



Discover how to:

- Choose the best Android device for you
- Install great apps for everything you need
- Keep all your personal data private and safe
- Stream music, movies and TV for free
- Fix frustrating problems quickly and easily
- Use secret hacks to improve your device

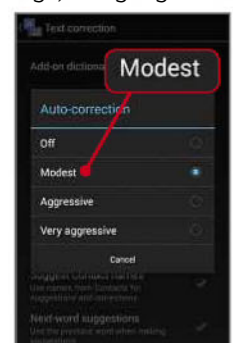
Order The Definitive Guide to Android now from Amazon at bit.ly/guidetoandroid



whether it should download attachments automatically.

AUTO-CORRECTION MISTAKES

Although the built-in Android keyboard is generally very good at detecting and correcting your typing errors, occasionally it changes a word you've spelt correctly to something entirely different. If this presumption is starting to irk you, go to Settings, 'Language & input' and tap the slider icon to the right of your default keyboard. Choose 'Text correction' (or similar) then Auto-correction and either change the setting to Modest or turn it off altogether.



Update everything automatically

If you want your devices to run smoothly and securely, your software needs to be up to date. **Rob Beattie** explains the easiest ways to update your programs, apps and drivers

Check that Windows is updating automatically

Windows updates can occasionally cause problems rather than fix them – back in August, an update called MS14-045 caused the dreaded ‘Blue Screen of Death’ on some PCs – but, for the most part, it’s best to let Windows download updates automatically.

To check that your Windows Vista or 7 PC is set up for automatic updates, open the Control Panel, click ‘System and Security’ and choose Windows Update. Click ‘Change settings’ in the left-hand column and select ‘Install updates automatically’ from the ‘Important updates’ drop-down menu. You can choose a time to apply these so the process doesn’t interfere with your daily routine, or select the option to ‘Download updates but let me choose whether to install them’ instead.



If you’re using Windows 8/8.1, open the Charms bar, choose Settings, then Change PC Settings. Select ‘Update and recovery’ and click ‘Choose how updates get installed’. Make sure this option is set to install updates automatically and deselect extra options such as ‘Recommended



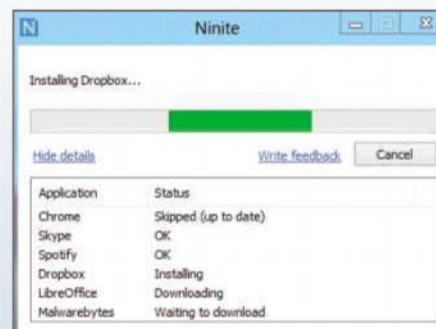
updates’ and Microsoft Update.

If you’ve been very disorganised or you have just started using a new or second-hand PC and need to catch up on a load of updates in one go, you can download the latest service packs from bit.ly/service359.

Download updates for your favourite software

Most paid-for programs automatically check for, download and install updates. This isn’t always the case with free tools, so you may have to update the software manually or use a dedicated update checker to do the hard work for you.

There are several reputable services to choose from, including the excellent Ninite (ninite.com), which lets you specify the programs you want it to monitor and downloads a personalised checker. This automatically grabs the latest versions of the software you’ve selected while skipping tools that are already up-to-date. Ninite covers browsers, image editors, email, media players, system tools, online-storage services, office software and more.



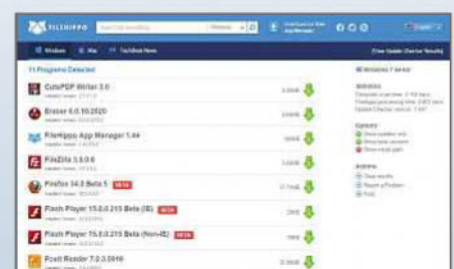
Alternatively, Secunia (secunia.com) puts the emphasis on improving the security of non-Microsoft programs with its free Personal Software Inspector (PSI). This runs in the background on your PC and won’t cause any conflicts with existing anti-virus software you



have installed. An Android version is available (bit.ly/secuniaandroid359), which downloads security updates for apps on your phone or tablet.



However, our favourite update checker is the tiny free tool from FileHippo (www.filehippo.com/updatechecker), which is only 260KB in size and took mere seconds to scan our PC and return a list of 11 out-of-date programs.



Update all your hardware drivers

Drivers are the small 'helper' programs that let hardware such as graphics cards and scanners communicate with Windows to work securely and efficiently. Windows does a reasonable job of keeping your drivers up to date, but there are several more efficient programs that check your installed hardware against their own database of drivers, then notify you when updates are required. Some of them charge you to download the new drivers, but the free version of DriverMax (www.drivemax.com) offers many of the same features as the paid-for version, including a daily check for updated drivers, automated installation and rollback to older drivers if something goes wrong. Make sure you decline any extra options during installation, though.



If you're having hardware problems, visit the website of the company that manufactured the piece of hardware you think is to blame. It isn't always easy to deduce who made which component in your system, so download the free Belarc Adviser (www.belarc.com/free_download.html) to zip through and report on your hardware configuration. Once you establish the manufacturer of a particular piece of hardware, trawl the Support section of the company's website until you find the drivers.

We'd always recommend going to the



UK website first, then the US one if you're not having any luck. And if your device is particularly ancient, check to see if the site has a 'legacy' driver section, where you may still find what you're looking for. On no account should you pay for drivers, so watch out for sites that try to trick you into doing so.

Get the latest versions of browser plug-ins

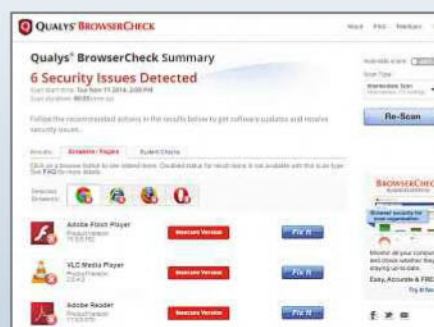
Although modern browsers do a good job of keeping themselves up to date (or at least prompting you to update them), they can be less efficient when it comes to plug-ins such as Adobe Flash. If you're using Chrome, you'll see a warning message under the address bar when you visit a page that needs a more recent version of the plug-in you're using, along with instructions on how to install it. As of September this year, Internet Explorer does something similar by highlighting outdated ActiveX controls (Microsoft treats everything as if it was an ActiveX control, even Java) and offers to install the latest version.



Firefox users should go to the Plugin Status page (bit.ly/plugin359), which scans your installation, tells you which browser plug-ins are showing their age and offers to update them for you.



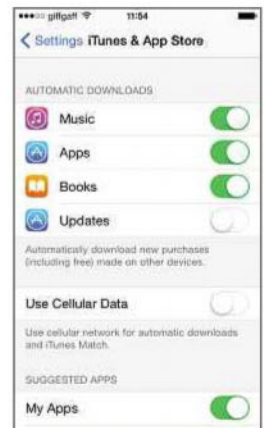
If you use more than one browser, try the free tool Qualys BrowserCheck (browsercheck.qualys.com). This scans Chrome, Firefox, Internet Explorer, Opera and Safari to detect outdated versions and other security problems. Choose Intermediate Scan from the Scan Type menu to check all installed



browsers and plug-ins, then click the Fix It button beside scan results marked as 'insecure version' or 'update available' to install the updates.

Update your phone and tablet apps

With hackers increasingly targeting mobile devices, it's vital to keep all your apps up to date. Apple adds little 'badges' to its App Store and Settings icons to indicate when updates are available, but you can also set the device to update everything automatically. Tap Settings, 'iTunes & App Store' then scroll down to Automatic Downloads and select the items you want to update automatically.



On an Android phone or tablet, you can update apps manually by opening the Play Store app, tapping the menu button and choosing My Apps. Look for entries that have Update next to them and tap this option. Alternatively, you can let the device handle everything for you by choosing Settings from the Play Store menu and selecting 'Auto-update apps'.

When an update to the mobile operating system becomes available – such as the forthcoming Android Lollipop – you'll get a notification at the top of your screen. Just follow the instructions to download and install it.

To make sure your device is running the latest version of the mobile OS, open Settings, select About and, tap 'System updates' and, once again, follow the instructions (note that, because different manufacturers have different versions of the Android OS, the steps may be slightly different on your device).

Both iOS and Android also let you choose to only update apps when you're connected to Wi-Fi, which is much faster than using a mobile data connection and stops you from exceeding your monthly download limit. ■



Broadband Deals

Call FREE on 0800 083 2357 to switch your broadband

	Provider	Package name	Monthly price	Contract length	Broadband speed	Allowance	First-year cost*
1		Plusnet: Broadband & Calls	£9.99 (£1.50 for 12 months)	18 months	17Mbps max speed	∞ unlimited	CHEAPEST £18.00
2		TalkTalk: Broadband	£3.50 (HALF PRICE for 12 months)	18 months	17Mbps max speed	∞ unlimited	£21.00
3		EE: Broadband & Calls	£9.95 (£2.50 for 12 months)	12 months	17Mbps max speed	∞ unlimited **	£30.00
4		Fuel: Broadband	£4.00 (HALF PRICE for 6 months)	18 months	16Mbps max speed	∞ unlimited **	£36.00
5		Sky: Broadband & Calls	£7.50 (HALF PRICE for 12 months)	12 months	17Mbps max speed	∞ unlimited	£45.00
6		Plusnet: Fibre Broadband & Calls	£14.99 (FREE for 6 months)	18 months	38Mbps max speed	∞ unlimited	£89.94
7		Virgin: Broadband & Calls	£15.50 (£10 for 12 months)	18 months	50Mbps max speed	∞ unlimited **	£120.00
8		Sky: Fibre Broadband & Calls	£20.00 (FREE for 6 months)	18 months	38Mbps max speed	∞ unlimited	£120.00
9		EE: Fibre Broadband & Calls	£19.95 (£5 for 3 months)	18 months	38Mbps max speed	∞ unlimited	£194.55
10		Virgin: Broadband & Calls	£28.00 (£22.50 for 12 months)	18 months	152Mbps max speed	∞ unlimited **	FASTEST £270.00

Call 0800 083 2357 or visit www.broadbandgenie.co.uk/webuser

Terms & Conditions apply - see ISP sites for details

*First-year cost does not include line rental. Cost is calculated at monthly price x12 with all introductory offers subtracted. Additional charges incurred outside of free inclusive calls not included in first-year cost.

** Fair-usage or restriction policy applies.

Data supplied by www.broadbandgenie.co.uk. Correct as of 18 November 2014.

Ofcom

Broadband Genie's helpline is powered by Simplify Digital, the Ofcom-accredited switching service



Take a Screen Break

Give your eyes a rest from your PC, phone or tablet, and try our fiendish fortnightly challenge. This issue we're asking: how well do you know **Yahoo**?

YAHOO!

1 What was Yahoo originally called when it was founded by electrical-engineering graduates Jerry Wang and David Filo in 1994?

2 True or false: the name Yahoo is an acronym for Yet Another Hierarchical Official Oracle?

3 What was the original name of the webmail service that Yahoo bought and rebranded as Yahoo Mail?

4 In which year did the Yahoo UK & Ireland portal (uk.yahoo.com) launch?

5 What's the name of the blogging service that Yahoo bought in May 2013?



6 What is the name of Yahoo's current president and CEO (pictured)?

7 Which company attempted a 'friendly takeover' of Yahoo in February 2008?

8 How many million users does Yahoo claim to have worldwide?

9 What was the name of the popular web-hosting service that Yahoo purchased in 1999 and closed 10 years later, deleting around seven million pages?

10 How many different logo designs did Yahoo unveil last year, before confirming its final new logo?

11 Earlier this year, BT ditched Yahoo Mail as the provider of its customers' webmail. But which rival ISP switched its customers to Yahoo Mail last year?

12 What was the name of Yahoo's showbiz-gossip site, which launched in 2007, but has since been renamed Yahoo Celebrity?

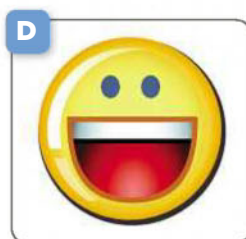
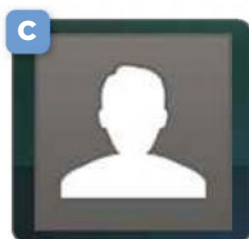
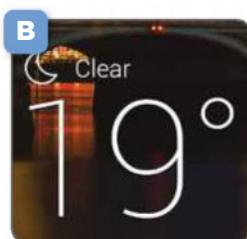
13 Yahoo Search is now 'powered by' which search engine?

14 How much free online storage does the Yahoo-owned photo-sharing service Flickr give users?



15 What colour was the original Yahoo logo before it went purple?

CAN YOU IDENTIFY THE YAHOO SERVICES FROM THESE PICTURES?



Get the answers online at www.webuser.co.uk/quiz359

COMPETITIONS

WIN 1 OF 4 Serif WebPlus X8

The latest update to Serif's powerful website-design tool provides many new and improved features to help you quickly create stylish and interactive websites, optimised for any device. New features include an interactive, task-based web-design assistant, which automatically fixes errors in real-time and prompts SEO improvements. To enter, email your address to webusercomp@dennis.co.uk with 'webplus' in the subject line. For more info, visit www.serif.com.



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WIN 1 OF 3 Pinnacle Studio 18 Ultimate

Pinnacle Studio 18 Ultimate uses its native 64-bit power to create breathtaking movies with new 4K Ultra HD video Smart Encoding and support for the XAVC S format. You can record directly from your screen with the enhanced Live Screen Capture; get creative with advanced 3D features; edit unlimited tracks; and use over 700 presets and 55 plugins. To enter, email your address to webusercomp@dennis.co.uk with 'pinnacle' in the subject line. For more info, visit www.pinnaclesys.com.



WORTH
£99.95
EACH



Practical WebUser

17 pages of workshops, tips, projects and problem solving

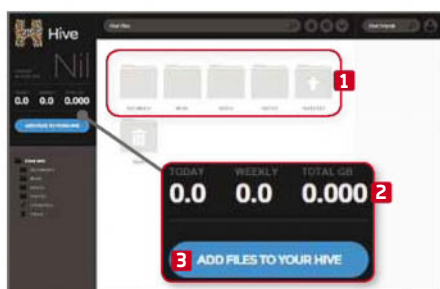
Get unlimited online storage for free with Hive | hive.im

Hive offers totally free and unlimited cloud storage for both you and your friends. Here's how to use this new service

It's not easy to decide which cloud-storage service to opt for when there are so many to choose from. Each one offers a varying amount of free space and if you have a lot of files to upload, you might be tempted to sign up to several different services to increase storage space. A simpler idea would be to sign up to Hive, which provides unlimited storage space for free. The

only limit imposed is that you can't upload more than 50GB of files to your Hive account per week.

The service also offers a premium version with additional features, including no ads and HD-video streaming. While this will eventually be charged for, the good news is that all premium features are currently free during the beta testing stage.



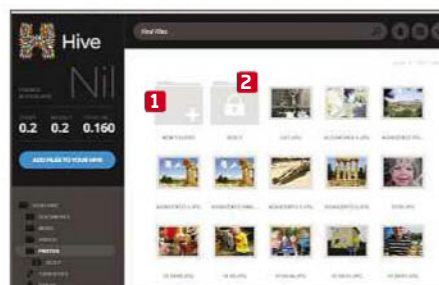
1 Start by signing up for a free account. You'll be given the option to add a profile picture to make it easier for friends to find you online. Once that's done, your Hive will open. You'll see folders for your content **1** and a counter showing how much storage you're using. **2** Click 'Add files to your Hive'. **3**



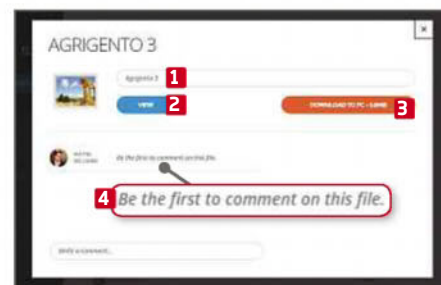
2 You can add content in a variety of ways. Drop files onto the target area, **1** import them from Dropbox **2** or paste in web links. **3** Hive will show you any pending uploads **4** and file transfers. **5** You can upload up to 30 files at once, each up to a maximum of 250MB in size. HD video files can be up to 20GB.



3 Your uploads are stored under Transfers. Click the link **1** to view your files. To sort the content, click and drag files into the relevant folders. Holding down Shift or Ctrl as you click will let you select and move multiple items. Content can be sorted by Date and File Type. **2**



4 Open a folder containing items you've uploaded. You can create subfolders by double-clicking New Folder **1** and giving it a name. You can lock the folder **2** to prevent friends from accessing its contents. Sort your files by clicking and dragging them into the subfolders.



5 Double-click a file to open its information card, or right-click to choose between the card or sending the file to the bin. From the card you can rename the item, **1** view (or stream) it, **2** download it, **3** and read and write comments. **4** When you add friends, they can also comment on your files.

H Click the Hive logo from anywhere to open your welcome/activity page



SWITCH VIEWS

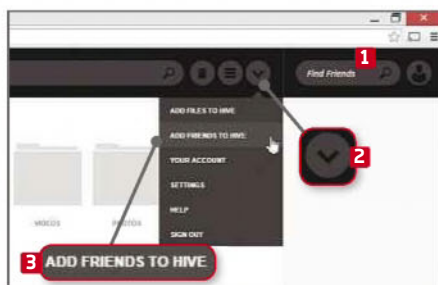
This button lets you switch the item view to show either thumbnails or details (including a mini thumbnail and file-size info)

SETTINGS

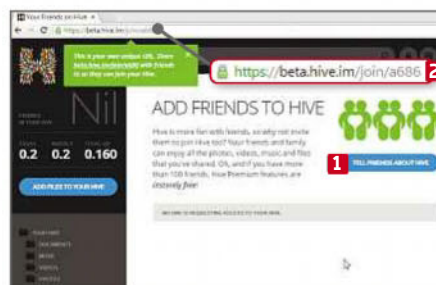
Click the down arrow to open Settings. From here, you can choose which (if any) Hive notifications to receive by email

ACTIVITY

This screen shows you content recently added by you or your friends



6 To add people you know to Hive, click inside the 'Find Friends' box **1** and search for someone by name. A list of possible matches will appear. You can also invite friends to use Hive. Click the arrow **2** and select 'Add Friends to Hive' **3** in the drop-down menu.



7 Click 'Tell Friends about Hive' **1** and you'll be able to invite them to join using Facebook, Twitter, Google+ or Tumblr. You can also send them an invite by entering their email address. If you prefer, you can just pass on your unique URL. **2** Anyone with this information can then join your Hive.



8 Once you've added one or more friends, you can select them from the sidebar. You can choose to follow their media activity **1** and view their hive. **2** Hover your mouse over In Your Hive **3** to change it to Remove User. Click to delete them. Any friends you have in common will also be shown here. **4**



Use a USB key to lock and unlock your PC

USB Raptor: bit.ly/usbraptor359 | ⌚ 10 mins | 🖥️ Windows XP, Vista, 7, 8+

If your PC is in a public place or you want to make sure no-one can get into your laptop, it's a good idea to use a login and password. However, having to log in several times a day can be repetitive and tedious. USB Raptor makes locking and unlocking your PC as simple as removing a USB drive and re-inserting it – you don't have to press Ctrl+Alt+Del or enter a password, and the process is instant.

The tool works by saving an unlock file to your USB drive, then unlocking your PC for as long as the encrypted information can be located by USB Raptor. Fast and secure, it works with any USB drive and you can even use the same drive to unlock other PCs. You don't have to worry about losing or breaking the USB key because you can create a password to unlock your PC in case of emergency.

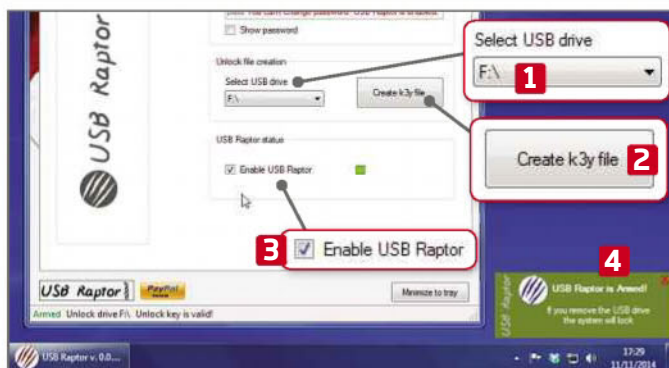
In this Workshop, we show you how to set up USB Raptor, customise its lockscreen, make it launch on startup and access its advanced options.



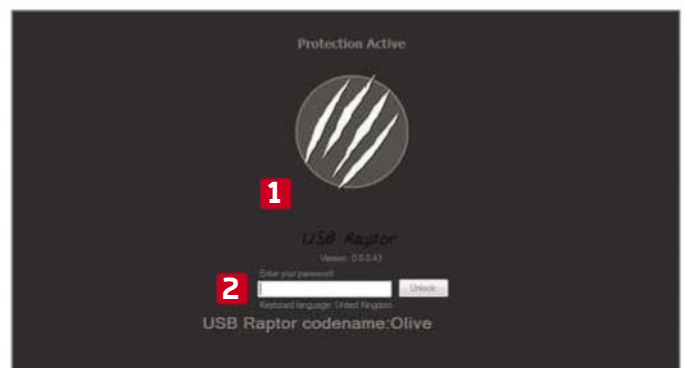
1 Download, extract and run USB Raptor. **1** The program is portable but the zipped folder contains other files used by the program, **2** so it's a good idea to keep everything together.



2 Get a USB stick that you want to use as a key and insert it in your PC. Confusingly, your password is only shown when you untick the 'Show password' box. **1** Enter a password that you'll remember, **2** in case you lose or break your USB drive.



3 Select the USB drive that you want to use from the drop-down menu **1** and click 'Create k3y file' to save the unlock file to the drive. **2** Next, tick the box to enable USB Raptor **3** and a pop-up appears telling you that 'USB Raptor is armed'. **4**



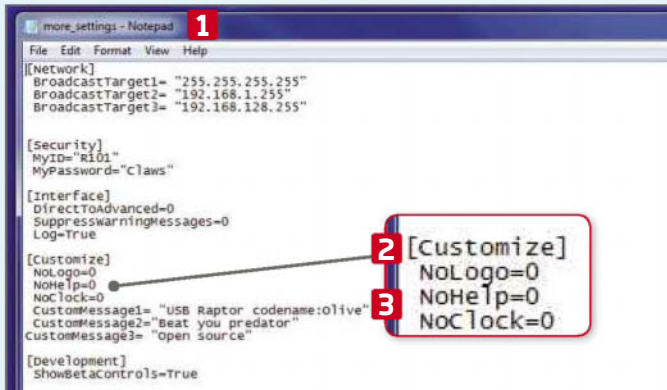
4 If you remove your USB drive while the tool is running, a lockscreen appears. **1** You can unlock your PC by re-inserting the USB drive or by double-clicking the lockscreen and entering the password you set up earlier. **2**



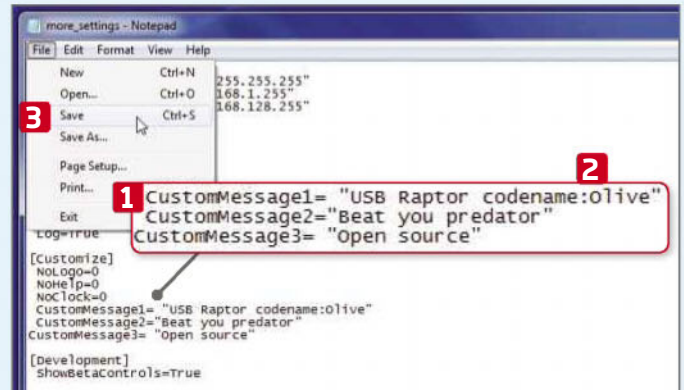
EXPERT TIP

Edward Munn says

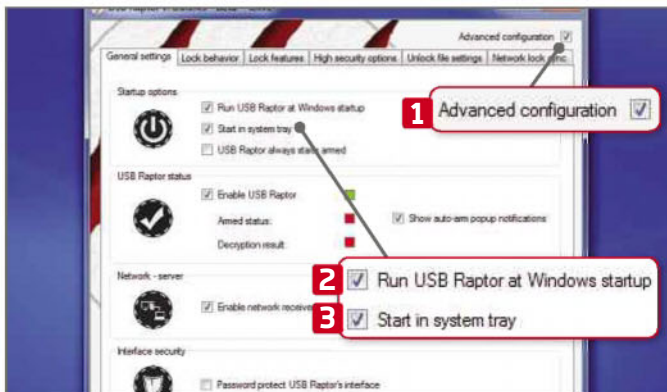
You can set USB Raptor to lock your PC after a period of inactivity by using its screensaver tool. This is included in the USB Raptor download file, so look for the folder named 'Screen Saver', right-click USB Raptor Screen Saver and select Install. Click Settings alongside the screensaver to confirm you know the USB Raptor password, then click OK.



5 Reopen the folder you unzipped earlier and open the file named 'more_settings'. **1** Under the heading [Customize], **2** change the value next to any of the first three entries from '0' to '1' to disable the listed feature from appearing on the lockscreen. **3** Click File and Save to save your changes.



6 'CustomMessage1' **1** refers to the text that scrolls across your monitor on the lockscreen. To display a message of your choice when your PC is locked, change the text inside the appropriate quotation marks. **2** Remember to save the file in order to make the changes take effect. **3**



7 Open USB Raptor again and tick 'Advanced configuration' **1** to access its advanced settings. In 'Startup options', tick the box to run USB Raptor when Windows launches. **2** Tick 'Start in system tray' to make it launch in the background, so you can open it whenever it's required. **3**



8 Ticking 'USB Raptor always starts armed' **1** means that your PC will be locked if you start it up without a valid USB drive. You should only enable this option if you are sure that you will always have your USB stick or password to hand.



9 If you'd rather use USB Raptor as a trigger for the Windows lockscreen than as a simple key to unlock your PC, click the 'Lock behaviour' tab, **1** then tick 'System lock (Simple mode)'. **2** Note that USB Raptor won't be able to log you in automatically if you select this option.



10 You can tick 'Delay lock 5 secs' **1** to make a countdown appear on your Desktop before USB Raptor locks your PC. Clicking 'Allow cancel during delay' **2** lets you click the countdown in order to cancel the lock.



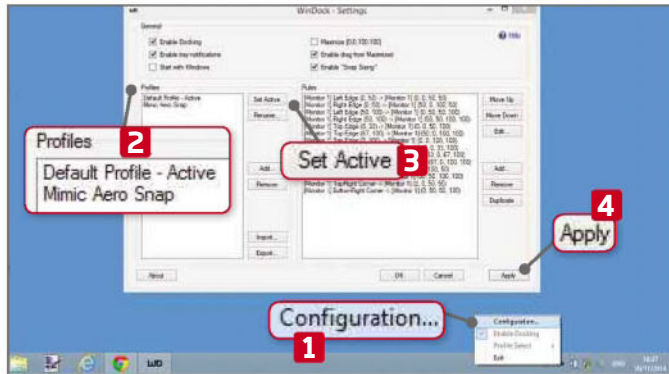
Make windows open the same way, every time

Windows can be infuriatingly random in the way it opens programs; sometimes they're in the same place as when you closed them, other times not. WinDock lets you configure how you like your

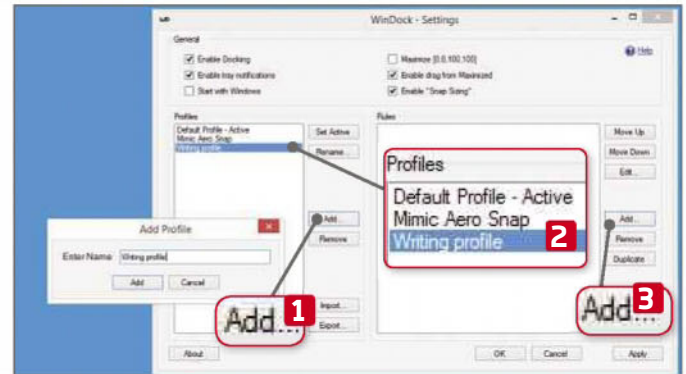
Desktop arranged. When you drag new windows to certain 'trigger' points, they'll resize and slot into pre-defined spaces, making it quick and simple to have your software arranged just how you like it.



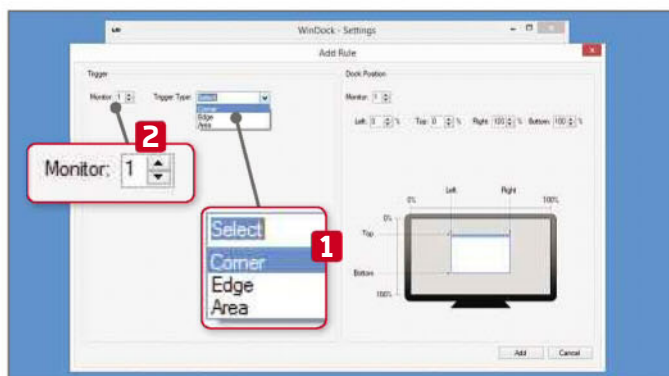
WinDock: bit.ly/windock359 | ⌚ 5 mins | 🖥️ XP, Vista, 7, 8+



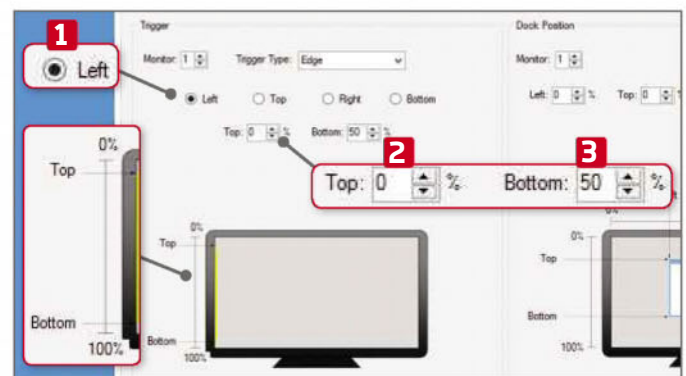
1 Right-click the WinDock icon in the Notification Area and choose Configuration. **1** To switch between the two pre-configured profiles, select one, **2** click Set Active **3** then Apply. **4** Drag and drop the WinDock window to the edges of the screen in Default Profile to see it snap to different areas.



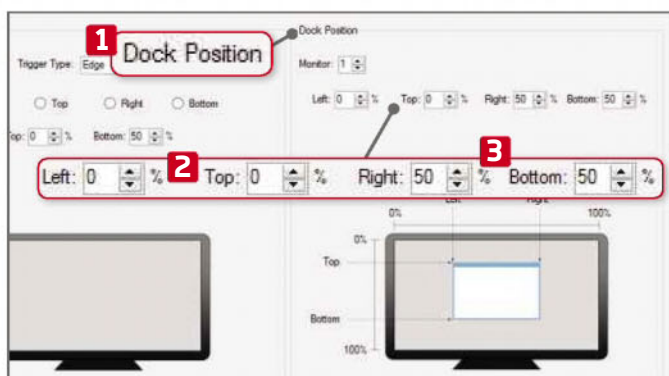
2 To create a profile of your own, click Add **1** and type a name into the Enter Name box of the Add Profile window. Once created, it will appear in the Profiles list. **2** To add a new rule, click the other Add button **3** to bring up the Add Rule window.



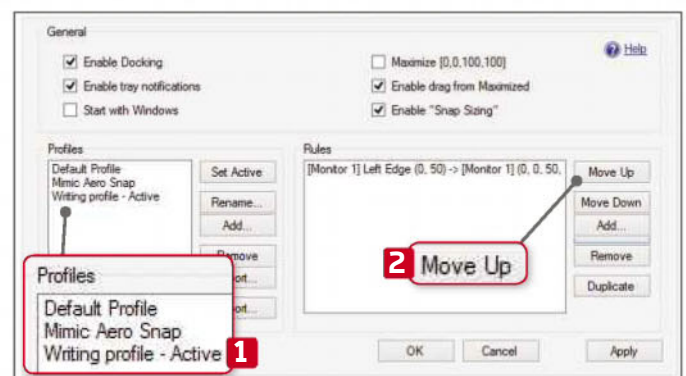
3 In the Trigger section, use the Trigger Type menu to select the first trigger position. **1** When you drag a window's title bar to the trigger position, it will move the window to the Dock Position (see Step 5). You can also set up multi-monitor triggers **2** if you use more than one screen.



4 Set the position for your selected trigger from the options. An Edge trigger, for example, lets you choose an edge, **1** then a section of that edge using percentages. Here, we've set the top to 0% **2** and the bottom to 50% **3** so that our trigger will be located in the top half of the left edge.



5 Choose where you want the window to dock in the Dock Position section. **1** Set the positions of the four corners of the window as percentages of the screen. We've set this one to dock in the top-left quarter by setting Left and Top to 0% **2** and Right and Bottom to 50%. **3**



6 Click OK and make sure your profile is active. **1** Pick up your window by the title bar and drag it to the trigger position. It will dock into place. Add more rules in the same way. You can give rules priority by moving them up the list. **2**



Bypass the Windows Control Panel

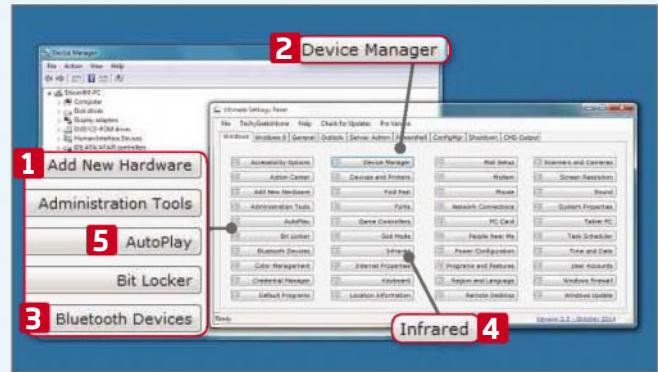
Finding a particular setting in Control Panel isn't always as straightforward as it should be. Often it can take three or four clicks to locate the page you're looking for, if you manage to find it at all. In this Workshop, we show you

how to fix this problem by using Ultimate Settings Panel, which gives you one-click access to all the settings you'll ever need.

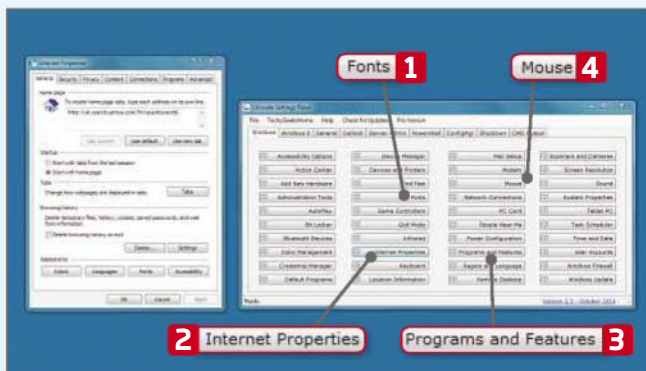
Ultimate Settings Panel: bit.ly/ultimate358 | 10 minutes | XP, Vista, 7, 8+



1 Download, unzip and run Ultimate Settings Panel. It's a portable application, so you don't need to install it, but do save the file somewhere you can find it. **1** Once it's launched, you'll find a range of shortcuts in the Windows tab to everything from Accessibility Options to Windows Update.



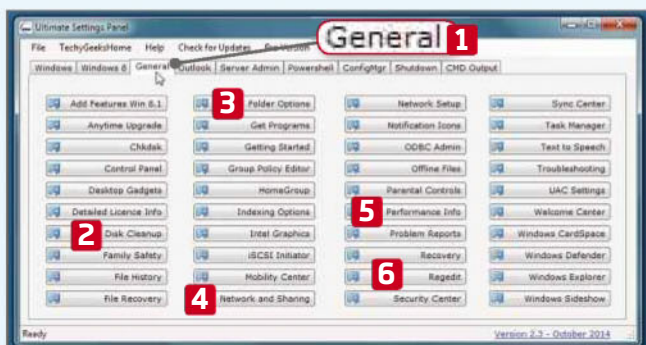
2 Add New Hardware **1** and Device Manager **2** take you to the same Windows tool, while Bluetooth Devices **3** and Infrared **4** only work if your PC has the correct hardware installed. AutoPlay **5** lets you choose the default action when you insert a CD, DVD or USB.



3 If you want to manage the fonts on your PC **1** or check your internet Properties, **2** there are useful shortcuts for both these options. To see a list of all the installed programs on your PC, click 'Programs and Features', **3** or to change your mouse properties, click Mouse. **4**



4 Click Screen Resolution **1** to access your display settings, and Sound **2** to alter your PC's sound settings. Windows Firewall **3** and Windows Update **4** give you handy shortcuts to regularly used tools.



5 Click General **1** to browse another set of shortcuts to features such as Disk Cleanup, **2** Folder Options **3** and 'Network and Sharing'. **4** Click Performance Info **5** to check the Windows Experience Index, or select Regedit **6** to open the Registry Editor.



6 If you're not sure what a shortcut does, click the Help tab **1** and Button Functions. **2** Several of the Ultimate Settings Panel's tabs of shortcuts can only be unlocked by upgrading to the Pro version of the software for 89p. To do so, click Pro Version **3** and then Buy Now.

Weekend Project

Get to grips with some serious PC DIY to boost your computer's performance



How to...

Make your old wired devices wireless

You don't have to chuck out your old hardware to get a wireless set-up at home. **Wayne Williams** shows you how to convert wired devices

Wi-Fi is convenient and tidy because it lets you connect to your network and the internet without trailing wires all over the place. While many modern devices come with Wi-Fi built-in, a lot of older hardware doesn't, so if you want to print a document but your printer isn't wireless, or you want to stream a song from your phone to some non-wireless speakers, your options are limited. Fortunately, it's actually pretty easy to convert any old wired devices to wireless, and there are all sorts of cheap ways to do it, some of which are entirely free.



Unleash your printer

The beauty of wireless printers is that they let you connect to and print from any compatible device that's in range. You can print a document from your PC, tablet or smartphone, or even one that's stored in the cloud. This is a vast improvement over having to copy files to the one computer that the printer is tethered to, and then print from there.

Most modern printers come with Wi-Fi built in, but if yours doesn't and you don't feel a pressing need to replace it with one that does, there are several easy options that can add Wi-Fi to even a really old printer, so long as it has a USB port.

A wireless print server adds Wi-Fi capabilities to any standard printer and just needs to be plugged into your

printer's USB port. TP-Link TL-WPS510U (bit.ly/tpprint359) is a 150Mbps pocket-sized device that supports 802.11b/g/n Wi-Fi standards and comes with one USB 2.0 port. It's available for £36.50 on Ebuyer (bit.ly/ebuytp359). Alternatively, you could consider the Lexmark Marknet 8352 Wireless Print Server, which also connects to 802.11b/g/n wireless networks and costs around £33 on

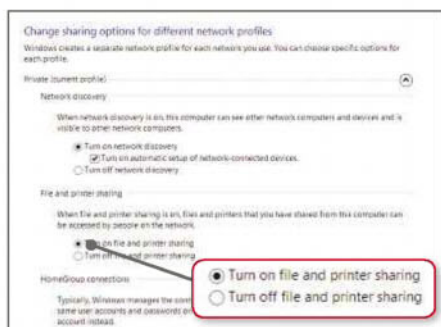


This TP-Link wireless print server can make a USB printer work wirelessly

Ebuyer (bit.ly/lex359).

Another option is to share a wired printer over your network, so other computers can access it wirelessly. This is very easy to do, although the

drawback is that the computer connected to the printer (via USB) has to be switched on so you can print to it. To set up printer sharing, go to Start, Control Panel, 'Network and Internet', 'Network and Sharing Center'. Click the 'Change advanced sharing settings' link on the left. Make sure 'Network discovery', 'File and printer sharing' and 'Public folder sharing' are all turned on.



To share a printer through a PC, you need to make a few adjustments to your settings

Turn off 'Password protected sharing' and then click the 'Save changes' button. You may need to log off and log back on again (or simply restart your PC) for the settings to take effect. Click Start and select 'Devices and Printers'. Double-click the one you want to share, then double-click 'Customise your printer'. Click the Sharing tab and tick 'Share this printer'. Give the device a name, then Apply and OK the action. Log off and back on again, or restart your PC.



Control a printer from another computer as if it was attached to your current PC

Now you're ready to set up your other computers. Make sure they're connected wirelessly to your network, then click Start and type printer in the box. Click 'Add a printer' and select 'Add a network, wireless or Bluetooth printer'. Windows will search for your networked device. Select it when it's found, click Next and follow the steps to finish setting everything up.

Another option is to use Google Cloud Print (www.google.com/cloudprint), which will let you send printing tasks to any networked printer from anywhere, using an Android phone or tablet. It's designed to work with 'cloud-ready' printers, but will work with any old

printer. To set it up, follow our Mini Workshop, below.

Stream music to any speaker

Bluetooth speakers provide the best way of playing audio from a Bluetooth-enabled phone or tablet. Just pair a device and you're good to go. You can add Bluetooth support to wired speakers using a device such as Logitech's Bluetooth Audio Adapter (€34.99 from bit.ly/logibt359). Plug it into any mains socket, connect your wired (powered) speakers to it via RCA or 3.5mm inputs, then pair with your Bluetooth-enabled device. Belkin's NFC Enabled HD Bluetooth Music Receiver (€39.99 from bit.ly/belkinnfc359) works in the same way, but also lets you connect any NFC-enabled hardware



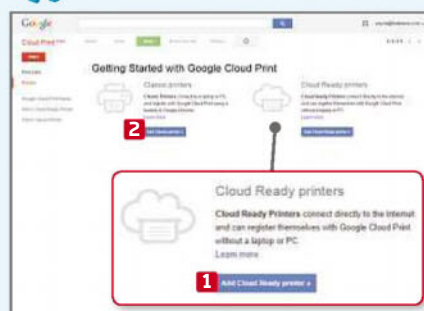
Logitech's Bluetooth Audio Adapter can transfer music from a phone to your speakers



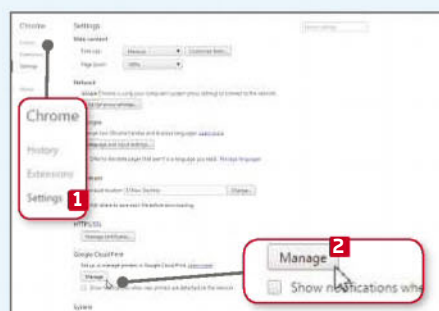
Belkin goes one better and can stream music through NFC



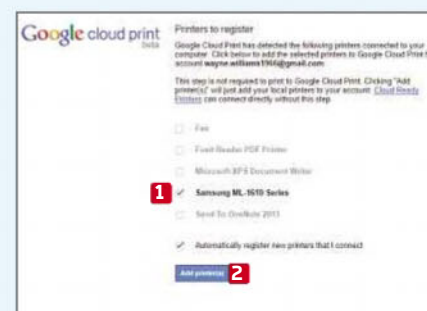
MINI WORKSHOP | Print files using Google Cloud Print



1 Go to www.google.com/cloudprint and log in with your Google account details (this must be the account you use on Android). If you have a cloud-ready printer, click that option. **1** Assuming you don't, click Add Classic Printer. **2** You'll see some detailed instructions for connecting offline printers to Google Cloud Print.



2 Click the Menu button in Chrome and select Settings. **1** Click the 'Show advanced settings' link at the bottom, then scroll down to Google Cloud Print. Click the Manage button, **2** then click 'Add printers' on the Devices screen. A list of all the available printers on your network will be displayed.



3 Select the printer you want in the list **1** and click 'Add printer(s)'. **2** Once that's done, run Chrome on your Android phone or tablet, and navigate to a page to print (a web page or a Google Doc, for example). Open the menu and select Print. Your printer should appear as an option. Select it and tap Print.



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Energy savings

A patent-pending "green" mode achieves online efficiencies approaching 99 percent, reducing heat loss and utility costs.





Plug a speaker into D-Link's Music Everywhere to stream music over Wi-Fi

(such as an Android phone) by tapping the devices together.

D-Link's Music Everywhere is a great product (bit.ly/music everywhere359) that also plugs into the mains. Add your speakers to it, then use the WPS button to connect the device to your home network. Once that's done, you can stream your music from any smart device. It offers support for both DLNA and AirPlay, and costs around £40 from Amazon.

Wireless scanning

Scanners are similar to printers, so it should come as no surprise that you can make them wireless, too. CloudScan (www.scanworksoftware.com) is a Twain-compliant service that lets you access a scanner via a browser from any device. There is of course one major difference between printers and scanners in that you have to be present to put the object you want to scan into the scanner,



CloudScan is a free tool that lets you use your scanner through a browser

so it's not something you can do remotely unless you can persuade someone else to feed the device! That said, it will allow you to scan content straight to a laptop, tablet or smartphone without the clutter of wires.

See our Mini Workshop below to find out how to set up your scanner.

Making your PC wireless

If you have a PC with a wired connection that you'd like to make wireless (so you can move it somewhere else without trailing wires), the best solution is to buy a small wireless dongle such as the Netgear WNA3100M Single Band N300 Mini USB Network Adapter. This costs between £13 and £20 (try bit.ly/buynetgear359) and simply plugs into any spare USB port on your PC. You then connect to your router as you would with any wireless device.



Any PC can go wireless with the addition of a tiny, cheap adapter

Control any electrical item with a smartphone or tablet

The WiSP Smart Point Plug (www.wispp.co.uk) lets you turn your house into Smart home, so you can control various elements such as lighting, heating, security cameras and more from a Smart device. Essentially, if you can plug something in, you can control it, although you're limited to simply turning the connected item on or off. You

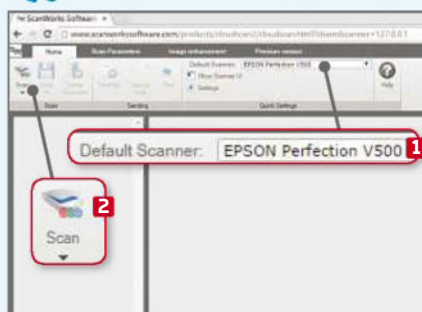
can install up to 150 WiSP devices around the home, although they cost about £30 each from Amazon (bit.ly/buywispp359). We reviewed the WiSP Smart Point Plug in Issue 355 of *Web User* (bit.ly/webuser355). ■



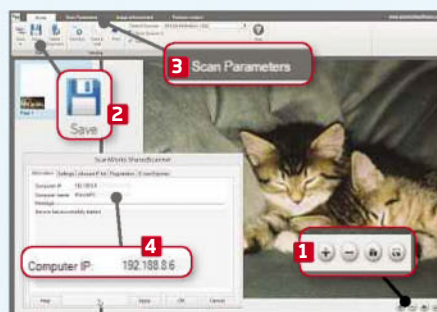
Control anything wirelessly with a WiSP Smart Point Plug



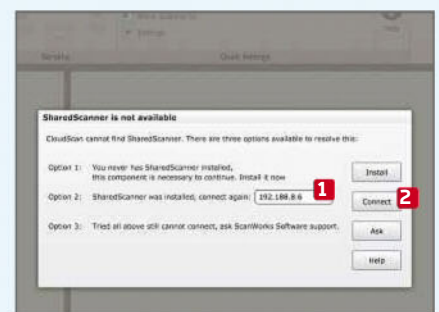
MINI WORKSHOP | Scan a document or photo wirelessly using CloudScan



1 Download SharedScanner (www.scanworksoftware.com) and install it on the PC connected to your scanner. Run the program and it will open a browser window, with your scanner correctly identified. **1** Click the Scan button **2** to run a trial scan so you can check that everything is working properly.



2 You can zoom in and out using the buttons **1** (or your mouse's scroll wheel) and save the image. **2** To adjust the scan settings, such as resolution and orientation, click the Scan Parameters tab. **3** To scan from elsewhere, right-click the SharedScanner icon in the System Tray and select Options. Make a note of your PC's IP address. **4**



3 Open a browser window on a different computer, tablet or smartphone and go to bit.ly/cloudscan359. Enter the IP address of the computer that the scanner is connected to **1** and click Connect. **2** It should present you with exactly the same interface and allow you to start using the scanner.

NEXT ISSUE

How To... Run Windows 8.1 from a USB drive

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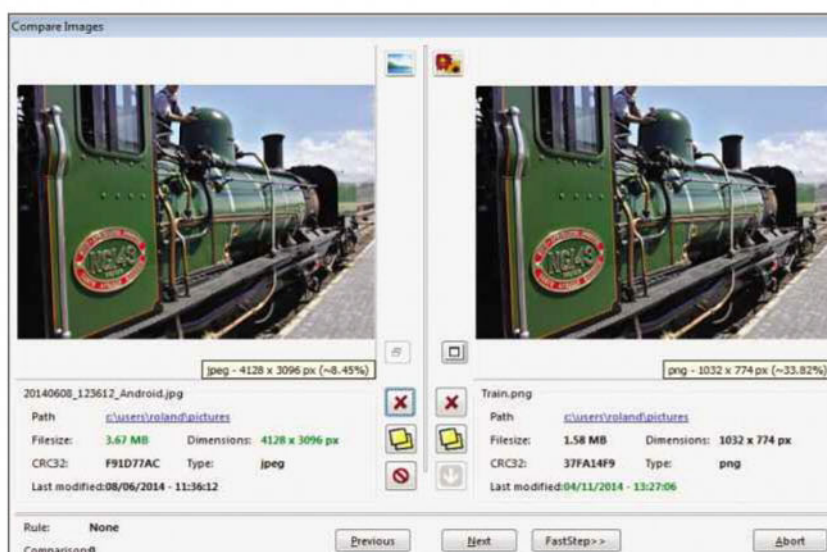
Free up hard-drive space by finding and deleting duplicate documents, photos, music and videos

TOP TIPS FOR FINDING AND REMOVING DUPLICATES

Find duplicate images that differ only slightly

Failing to erase photos from your camera, syncing with online storage and abandoning editing sessions can all lead to duplicate images on your PC. Fortunately, the free tool SimilarImages (bit.ly/similar359) can track them down and delete them. Run it and click the plus button on the right to add folders to scan, such as C:\Users\YourName\ Pictures. Click the scan (magnifying glass) button to display any duplicate images. To delete one, click the cross button below.

The slider on the home screen lets you set parameters that define what makes a duplicate. For example, you can allow for images that look identical but are a different size or resolution. 'Semi-automated deletion' means the duplicate image will be deleted automatically. You can set this to remove old versions of pictures that have been tweaked.



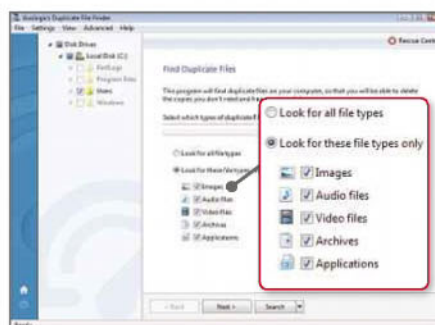
The photo on the right has been shrunk by 75 per cent and saved as a .png, but SimilarImages still identified it as a duplicate

Use a general-purpose duplicate finder

Some software for finding duplicates has been designed for specific types of files, such as photographs or music, but there are also general-purpose tools that let you track down all types of files. Auslogics Duplicate File Finder (bit.ly/dupff359), for example, leads you step-by-step through setting the parameters for scanning the hard drive.

Run it, expand the drives and folders on the left, and tick the locations you want to scan. The C:\Users folder is automatically selected, but you might want to add a USB drive or other

location. You can search for all files or specific types, such as photos or music. Simply select the options you want. Click Next and you can choose to ignore small or large files, or clear both options to find all duplicates, regardless of size. The option to ignore file names means that duplicates are found even if they have different names. The final option is to send deleted duplicates to the Recycle Bin, Rescue Center or to permanently delete them. We



Auslogics Duplicate File Finder is easy to use and finds all types of duplicate files

recommend one of the first two because they let you restore deleted files, in case you change your mind.

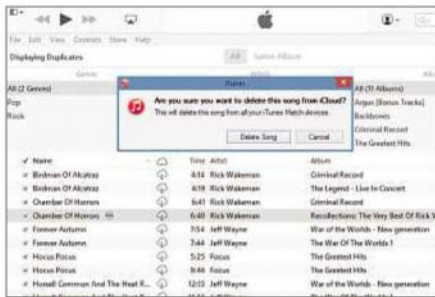
Click Search. When the results are displayed, click the arrow next to Select and choose 'Select one in each group'. Click the arrow again and choose 'Invert selection' to mark all duplicate files except for one of each. Click Delete Selected Files, but remember that files sent to the Recycle Bin or Rescue Center are still on the drive. To free the space, you still need to open the Recycle Bin or Rescue Center and delete them, once you're sure you don't need them.

• Be sure to select 'Custom install' during installation and deselect the bundled extras. When using the program, ignore the View and Advanced menus.

Delete duplicates in iTunes

To find duplicate tracks in iTunes, go to the View menu (press Ctrl+B for the menu bar) and select 'View

If you see words that look like they've been typed in a typewriter, follow the instructions and type them exactly as they appear, paying close attention to spaces and punctuation.



View duplicate tracks in iTunes, then right-click them and delete them

duplicate items'. Sometimes the results iTunes comes up with are not identical duplicates, so check before you delete anything. A studio track and a concert recording could have identical names, artists and durations, for instance, but you might still want to keep both versions. Sometimes an extended version of a track has the same name and title as the original, but a different length. It's best to listen to a duplicate track to check. If you still want to delete it, right-click it and choose delete.

Finding other audio duplicates

Duplicate Cleaner Free (bit.ly/cleaner359) has special features for finding audio duplicates. Run the program and select the Search Criteria tab, then the Audio Mode sub-tab. There are options to find tracks with the same or similar artist, title, album, filename or file date. On the Scan Location tab, choose which folders to scan, such as the Music folder, and click Scan Now.

After scanning, click the magic-wand button to mark files. Select Mark, 'All but one file in each group' to leave just one track in each group of duplicates. A useful option is Mark, 'Select by audio tags in each group', which lets you choose to mark the longest track, or the highest bit rate or sample rate.

Clean your contacts

If you use Gmail on your PC and mobile devices, you may have duplicate contacts. Open Gmail on the PC, click Gmail on the left and select Contacts. Click the More button and select 'Find & merge duplicates' to display a list of your duplicate contacts. Click the Merge button at the bottom to combine them into single contacts.

Scrubly (www.scrubly.com) is a website that removes unwanted duplicate contacts from various sources, such as Gmail, Outlook and Google apps. It can import Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn contact information, and it can help to resolve conflicts, such as different fields in duplicate contacts or the same phone number for home and work. It is free for up to 250 contacts.

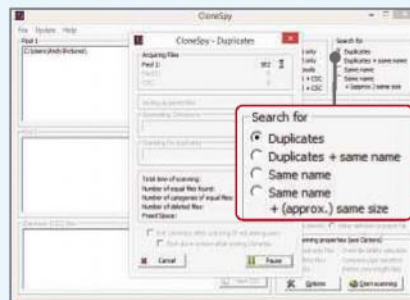
TAKE IT TO THE NEXT LEVEL

More advanced tips for if you're feeling brave

Advanced de-duping

CloneSpy (clonespy.com) is an advanced tool for finding duplicates. It's a bit more complicated than some of the other tools we've mentioned, but it has powerful features. When it launches, it displays three empty lists on the left. The top two are called Pool 1 and Pool 2.

The simplest way to use CloneSpy is to select 'Pool 1 only' in the Mode section, then click Add Folder and select one or more folders on the hard drive. Select Duplicates in the 'Search for' section, then 'Ask user' in the Action section. Click Start Scanning. When the scan has finished, a list of files is displayed, which can be selected and deleted. To make the process more efficient, use 'Preselect files' in the bottom-left corner of the results window, which provides options to select files by various criteria, including the oldest, newest, shortest- or longest-name duplicate.

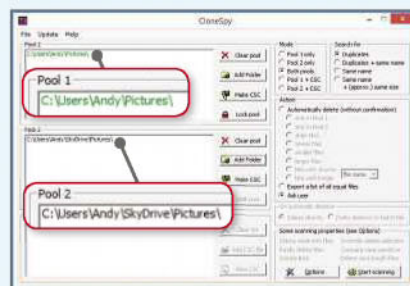


Use CloneSpy's Pool 1 to compare files in one or more folders

Taking CloneSpy further

To further fine-tune the deletion of duplicates, select 'Both pools' in the Mode section to compare files between Pool 1 and Pool 2. You can then choose to automatically delete duplicates solely in Pool 1 or Pool 2 by going to the Action section.

Automatic mode lets you skip having to manually select and delete



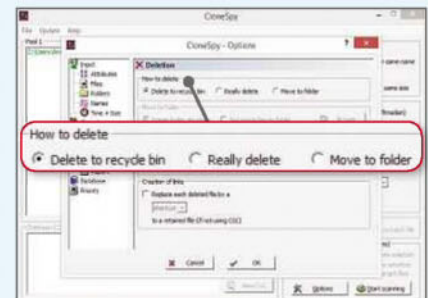
Using both pools lets you compare one drive or group of folders with another

each duplicate by choosing which folder or hard drive to clean. So if you have a USB drive, for example, you could delete all copies of files on the PC's hard drive in Pool 1 and keep all files on the USB drive in Pool 2. Or you could delete the duplicates on the USB drive, keeping the copies on the PC's hard drive.

Configure CloneSpy

There are numerous configuration options for customising CloneSpy. Selecting File, Options, Deletion and 'How to delete' lets you choose to completely delete files, send them to the Recycle Bin or move them to another folder. The second two options will not free up any drive space, but you will be able to recover your files and put them back if you change your mind.

The Time and Size options let you determine which files to scan. If the



You can choose where to send your deleted duplicates

folders being scanned contain large files that are hundreds of megabytes in size, such as video clips, the scan could take a very long time. To exclude these large files, go to the 'Size of files' section, tick 'smaller than' and set it to 50MB. Conversely, if you only want to check your large files you should make 50GB the minimum file size.

In the 'Time of files' section you can choose to ignore files that are newer or older than a certain date. Set the 'newer than' date to last week, for example, to only scan and delete duplicates of files created in the last seven days.

There are many more options for fine-tuning CloneSpy's search parameters. For example, on the File menu, you can save and load settings files, and reset to the defaults. This lets you save custom searches that can be used again later.

Ask the Expert

Roland Waddilove computer programmer and PC journalist since 1981, answers all your technical questions. Email us for help at webuser@dennis.co.uk



HARDWARE

Laptop hard drive upgrade

Q My son gave me a Dell N7110 laptop about three years ago but the hard drive is now broken. I'd like to replace it with a new drive running Windows 7. What do I need to do?

Alun Roberts, via email

A The hard drive on some laptops can be accessed by simply removing a cover on the base. Unfortunately, this isn't the case with the N7110, which has a hard drive that's very difficult to remove. We found two videos on YouTube (bit.ly/dell359 and bit.ly/laptop359) that demonstrate the process. Take a look at what's involved and if you don't feel confident tackling it yourself, get someone with more experience to do



Upgrading the N7110 is complicated but there are YouTube videos to guide you

it for you.

You will need to buy a 2.7in 7mm or 9mm SATA notebook hard drive to replace the old one, and a Windows 7 DVD to install the operating system afterwards. Once that's done, you can add drivers and other software, which can be downloaded from the Dell website (bit.ly/drivers359). Finally, you should install Dell Backup and Recovery (bit.ly/backup359) to create back-ups and rescue discs.

Blocking ads helps to speed up the browser and Chrome has a useful feature that blocks Flash ads and other plug-ins. Go to the menu, choose Settings and click the Advanced Settings link. Click Content Settings in the Privacy section and select 'Click to play' in the Plug-ins section. This will prevent Flash adverts, movies, PDFs and other items that appear in the browser from playing automatically.

A website wants to identify the browser and device you are using, so it can decide whether to display the desktop or mobile versions of its pages. It does this by looking at the user agent information. If you want to view a different version of the site, you can override the browser's user agent.

In Chrome, go to chrome.google.com/webstore; in Firefox, go to addons.mozilla.org. Type **user agent** in the search box and press Enter. You will see several user agent switchers. Select a popular one with good ratings, such as User-Agent Switcher for Chrome by Glenn Wilson (bit.ly/ua359). To see the mobile version of a website, just select a mobile device such as phone or tablet.

BROWSERS

Speed up slow pages

Q I find that the *Independent* newspaper's website (www.independent.co.uk) has got so slow that it takes around 30 seconds to load. Some other sites are not much better. I tried using CCleaner (www.piriform.com/ccleaner), but it makes no difference. I suspect it is the adverts. I find more and more sites often have a pair of vertical strips with ads down both sides, which judder as you move down the page. I have stopped Flash, which helps a little. Can I access mobile sites on a PC? I prefer them because they tend to be much cleaner.

Derek Emery, via email

A The *Independent's* web pages have a lot of stuff on them, and even with Chrome and Firefox running on a fast Core i7 PC, scrolling is slow and jerky. It is just a poor design. However, we found its pages were faster and more responsive in Internet Explorer. This may be because IE failed to display certain

objects on the page – mostly adverts – perhaps because the computer didn't have Flash installed. But all the important page elements were there, so this could be a solution to your problem.

Make sure you have an up-to-date browser, such as Chrome, Firefox or IE. Windows XP and Vista can't run the latest version of IE, so if you run these operating systems, use Chrome or Firefox, which are much faster than older versions of IE. Remove toolbars, add-ons and extensions because they slow down your browser by using extra processing power every time a page loads.



User-Agent Switcher lets you browse the web as any browser on any device

MOBILE

Tablet TV troubles

Q I have a 2013 Nexus 7 tablet and have been having a problem with the BBC iPlayer when downloading shows to watch later. Whenever I try to watch a programme I've downloaded, it runs for about 10 minutes and then starts to stutter. Both video and audio gets increasingly worse, stopping and starting, and renders the programme completely unwatchable. BBC iPlayer mentions this problem in its FAQ, but it's been going on for months and nothing has been done to fix it.

Can anyone advise a way to get around this? We pay our licence fee for BBC services and quite frankly this shoddy service is not good enough. Other organisations can fix problems much more quickly, so what on earth is holding the BBC back?

Tim Ash, via email



A The first generation Nexus 7 is underpowered by today's standards and it can run quite slowly at times, especially if you have the 8GB model. There are a few things that might help to smooth video playback and one is to stream it, rather than download it to save for later. TV show downloads can be pretty big, especially if you are downloading HD video, and this could lead to a shortage of memory and storage space. Try to avoid downloading HD programmes and choose the standard definition programmes if you can't stream them.

Tap the app switcher button and



Clean Master clears junk files to free memory and make apps run more smoothly on Android

swipe away all the apps that are in the background. Hold down the power button and switch off the Nexus 7, then switch it back on after a few seconds. An app such as Clean Master (bit.ly/clean359) can remove all junk files

from the storage and clean up the memory. This frees up space so that iPlayer can run faster.

SECURITY

Port Blocker packed up

Q I have AnalogX Port Blocker installed on my Windows 7 laptop and it works with no problems. I won't use the internet without it and would like to install it on my brand new Zoostorm desktop PC (www.zoostorm.com), which runs Windows 7 Home Premium 64-bit, and has 16GB of memory and a 3TB hard drive with 2.64TB free. But when I try to install AnalogX Port Blocker, I get a message saying: "Free space before installation -1,450,836,768K. Space used by application 215k (not enough space)."

I have contacted Zoostorm, but it couldn't help. I have managed to download other programs without any problems, and there is no fault, virus or corruption on the computer. A new download from the AnalogX website is not available.

Can you help? My desktop PC is practically useless because I refuse to

access the internet without having Port Blocker installed.

Liz, via email

A AnalogX Port Blocker is an old and outdated security program that blocks the ports through which programs access the network and internet. The AnalogX website does not appear to have been updated for five years and other download sites say the software is only compatible with Windows XP. I reckon it is time you left Port Blocker behind and moved on to something newer and better.

What you need is a firewall, and Windows has one already built in. Go to



ZoneAlarm Free Firewall provides more internet security than Windows Firewall

the Control Panel, Firewall, 'Turn Windows Firewall on or off'. Make sure it is turned on. The Windows Firewall is quite good at preventing unauthorised incoming internet and network connections, but it's very difficult to configure it to do anything more advanced than basic blocking.

Almost everyone accesses the internet through a router and this also has a firewall built in. Like Windows Firewall, routers tend to block unwanted incoming traffic more than outgoing traffic, but having the two means that your computer is doubly protected and should be fairly safe from hackers on the internet.

However, it is best to monitor both incoming and outgoing internet and network activity, and there are certainly better firewalls available than the Windows Firewall. A popular choice is ZoneAlarm Free Firewall 2015 (www.zonealarm.com), which is far better than Port Blocker. Another good alternative is Comodo Internet Security (www.comodo.com), which takes the extra step of combining malware protection with a firewall.

SECURITY

Fixing Kaspersky problems

Q I had the 2014 version of Kaspersky security installed on a desktop PC and a laptop, both running Windows 7. Both computers started failing to update due to corrupt files and outdated databases. I contacted Kaspersky about the problems and was given advice to uninstall the 2014 version and install the 2015 version, but the problems got worse and I could not access any web pages, email accounts or web programs.

I have spoken to Kaspersky and they have sent me an email with advice on how to fix the problem, but I don't feel confident about trying it. I will forward the email to you.

Willie West, via email

A There's a removal tool at bit.ly/unkasp359 that thoroughly uninstalls and removes all traces of Kaspersky software, but it hasn't yet been updated to include the 2015 version, so unfortunately you can't use it. The instructions emailed to you by Kaspersky are long and complicated, but they basically tell you how to



Panda Internet Security is a good free alternative to Kaspersky

erase all traces of Kaspersky software and any other programs that might cause conflicts with it, such as partially uninstalled versions of alternative security programs. If you're not confident about following the instructions, ask for help from a friend who has more experience.

The only easy alternative would be to abandon Kaspersky and install a different security program. There are many free alternatives, including AVG (free.avg.com), Avast (www.avast.com) and Panda Cloud Antivirus (www.cloudantivirus.com).



This fortnight Roland has been programming his Android phone with Microsoft on{X} (www.onx.ms)

Your Top Tips

Our pick of the best advice from our readers. To get help or offer it to others, visit forum.webuser.co.uk

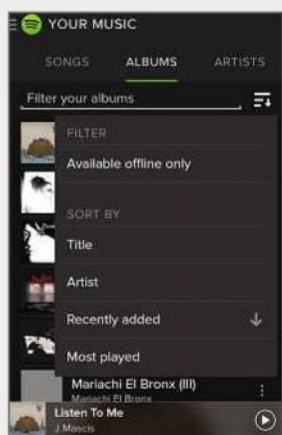


TOP TIP

MUSIC

Filter offline albums in Spotify

I subscribe to Spotify Premium and love using its offline feature to store albums on my smartphone when I'm about to embark on a long-haul flight or train journey. However, if I've only stored a few albums or playlists offline, it can be a real pain having to scroll through everything to find them. Fortunately, I've realised this isn't necessary, because you can filter your music to view only content that's available offline. Select Your Music, then Albums and swipe down until an



Spotify's offline music filter lets you find tracks available offline

icon with a downward-pointing arrow appears. Tap it, then select 'Available offline only' and only the albums you've downloaded to your device will appear. You can also use this menu to sort your albums by Title, Artist or the order in which you've added them, which I find particularly useful. To see your offline playlists, you'll need to repeat this process within the Playlists tab. To remove the filter, untick 'Available offline only' or tap Remove Filters.

Ed Wright, via email

£25 winner

SECURITY

Tucows malware alert!

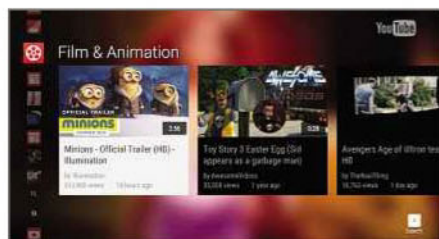
I would strongly suggest that anyone looking for freeware avoid the Tucows (tucows.com/downloads) website. I was recently looking for some freeware for extracting pages from PDF files and two of the three programs I downloaded from Tucows left malware on my PC.

John Lockett, via email

VIDEO

Watch YouTube in TV view

You can view YouTube videos full screen by clicking the button in the bottom-right corner of the player, but I recently



You can access YouTube's excellent TV interface on your computer

discovered an even better way to watch them. Go to www.youtube.com/tv# and press F11 to make the browser full screen. This is a completely different interface for YouTube that's designed for televisions, but it works great on computers, too. Use the up and down arrow keys to navigate the menu on the left, and the right and left arrow keys to select videos. You can use the mouse, but it works with the keyboard just as well and all the functions are really simple.

K Rogers, via email

GENERAL PC

Copy hundreds of items to your clipboard

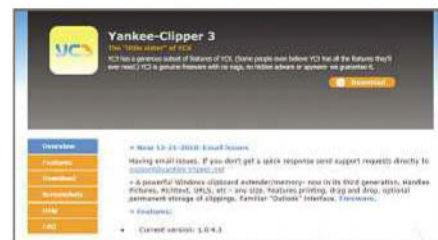
I have been using a small program on both of my PCs for a few years now and would never be without it. It's called Yankee-Clipper 3 (bit.ly/clipper359) and it can save up to 200 clipboard entries, which can then be copied or dragged to any document, any number of times.

The installation file is a clean download and I have never received any follow-up email from the company in the years that

I have used it. There have never been any updates either, I suppose because it simply doesn't need them.

Compared to the default Windows clipboard, which holds just one item at a time, YC3 is a very powerful tool. It can be launched from your taskbar and I often keep it open in the corner of my screen. I mention it because I have not seen it advertised anywhere but I have found it indispensable!

Blotmice, Web User Forums



Yankee-Clipper 3 lets you copy and paste lots of things simultaneously

GENERAL PC

Bypass the SmartScreen

I recently downloaded a program that was recommended to me but when I tried to run it, a message came up saying that Windows had protected the PC. I knew the program was safe, but Windows refused to run it. I then discovered that if you click the More Info link underneath the Windows message, you can choose to ignore the warning and run the program anyway. I wouldn't recommend doing this unless you know for certain that the program is safe, but it's useful to know how to get around it.

David Simpson, via email

BROWSERS

Multitask in Google Chrome

Did you know that you can split Google Chrome's window in two and open any links from the left-hand pane in the right-hand one? To do this, download the extension NiftySplit (bit.ly/nifty359). Once installed, the function is built into



NiftySplit splits your browser in half, loading links in the second window

the context (right-click) menu. I find it really handy if you want to work from two web pages at once but don't have dual monitors.

There are also a few Firefox add-ons that appear to do the same thing. I can't promise that they work as well as NiftySplit, but if you're a Firefox user you can try for yourself by downloading Split Pannel (bit.ly/split359), Tile Tabs (bit.ly/tile359) or Tile View (bit.ly/tileview359).

spiraleye and Madeline, Web User Forums

INTERNET

Exploring Google's history

Google tracks everything you do on the web so if you want to see what information is stored about you, go to google.com/history and log in. There are charts at the top that show your daily and hourly search activity, and below is a list of activities in descending chronological order. There are tick boxes next to each item, so you can select and then delete them. There are History categories on the left, so you can see all your activities in Maps, News, Blogs, Shopping and so on. Some people may find it interesting and useful, others might think it scary that Google has so much information. Check it out!

S Allan, via email



Explore your online history at Google to see when you have been most active

GENERAL PC

Search from Explorer

I've just discovered that you can go directly from an Explorer view of your hard drive to searching Bing, just by typing a search phrase. Simply click the box at the top of an Explorer window (I think it is called the 'breadcrumb trail') and enter a phrase to search the internet.

A browser window opens and displays search results from Bing. I can also log into my router by entering 192.168.1.254 into the breadcrumb box in an Explorer window.

I've tried this on Windows 7 and 8.1 and it works on both, though I haven't tried it on earlier versions. Also, it doesn't seem to work with a single word – it's got to be a phrase with at least two words.

Louis Steward, via email

BROWSERS

See stunning satellite images in Chrome

It might not be the most practical extension, but I recently discovered Earth View (bit.ly/earth359), which shows a stunning satellite image from Google Maps each time you open a new tab. To find out more about the shot, you can click the Globe icon in the bottom of the window and Google Maps will open the current view for you to explore that area. If you miss the default New Tab page, Google has included a button that lets you load it with a single click.

Tony Wilcox, via email



Earth View displays an image from Google Maps every time you open a new tab

BROWSERS

Change Chrome's spellchecker language

By default, Chrome's spellchecker is set to American English and the way to change it to British English is not as obvious as you might think. To do so, click the menu button, select Settings, then 'Show advanced settings'. Under the title Languages, choose 'Languages and input settings'. Ignore the English option because this cannot be used for spellchecking. Instead, click Add and select English (United Kingdom). To make this your default language, drag it to the top of the list.

Another item that is unticked by default is 'Use a web service to help resolve spelling errors'. It's under Privacy on Chrome's 'advanced settings' menu. If you tick this box, it disables the Chrome spellchecker and lets you select an alternative from the Chrome Store. I did this because the default spellchecker didn't give me the option to ignore a

word, which was annoying. I find the feature very useful.

FratPark and Bedstor, Web User Forums



Set UK English as your default language to stop Chrome suggesting US spellings

GENERAL PC

Delete temporary files

Windows and other programs create temporary files that build up on your PC over time. Quite often, when software is installed, the installation files remain on the hard drive. They use up space and can slow down your PC. Here is a list of folders where temporary files are stored, so you can go in and delete them:

C:\Temp
C:\Windows\Temp
C:\Users\yourname\AppData\Local\Temp
C:\Users\yourname\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Burn\Temporary Burn Folder

Mike Baker, via email

BROWSERS

Customise your homepage

While looking for an alternative homepage to Google, DuckDuckGo or Bing, I stumbled across Symbaloo (www.symbaloo.com). The website includes three tabs of handy shortcuts to sites including Facebook, Twitter and eBay, as well as a Google search bar and tools including a translator and calculator. To use it properly, you need to sign up (which can be done using your Facebook or Google account) so you can customise its tiles to suit your needs. I found that the site displays well in Chrome and Internet Explorer, and is listed as an app in the Chrome Web Store (bit.ly/symbaloo359). You can also install the Symbaloo Bookmarker add-on (bit.ly/bookmark359) to make adding websites to your Symbaloo page quick and easy.

Bedstor, Web User Forums



Sign up to Symbaloo to get a customisable homepage



Readers' Helpdesk

Our pick of the best solutions posted on our reader forums. Visit forum.webuser.co.uk – it's friendly and free!

SOFTWARE

How do I remove Zinio Reader from my PC?

Q I downloaded Zinio Reader a while ago, but now I want to get rid of it. However, I'm finding it incredibly difficult to uninstall. I've tried contacting Zinio but they supplied me with a convoluted series of instructions that I've tried and repeatedly failed to get my head around. For some unknown reason, it doesn't appear in 'Programs and Features' and the removal tools I've downloaded seem unaware of it. Can anyone help?

Bobcat, Web User Forums

A If the program isn't listed in 'Programs and Features' then it's probably already uninstalled. Windows normally creates restore points when a program is installed or uninstalled, so you can check your restore points and click 'Show more restore points' to see if the uninstall is listed. If it was a recent install, you may even have a restore point prior to the install that you could revert to. You could also try reinstalling it to make it reappear in 'Programs and Features', then you can use IObit Uninstaller (bit.ly/uninst359) to get rid of it for good.

Cantrel, Web User Forums



IObit Uninstaller helps remove programs, even when the Windows uninstaller fails

GENERAL PC

Should I bother with Windows Updates?

Q Does anyone else find Windows Update irritating? Sometimes, when I restart my PC, I'm left staring at the "do not turn off your machine" screen for what seems like eternity. Then, when all is done and it has re-started, I never notice

HARDWARE

What type of memory card do I need for the Hudl2?

Q I am considering buying the Hudl2 and would like to get a 32GB memory card to use with it. What kind of card do I need?

fossewayfella, Web User Forums

A You will need a microSD card for the Hudl 2. The main variable to consider when buying an SD card is its speed. Class 6 should be fine for normal usage on the Hudl, although you might consider buying a class 10 card if you are ever likely to record HD video to the card with another device, such as a smartphone. If you shop



The Hudl2 is compatible with microSD cards up to a capacity of 32GB

around, you'll find there is not that much difference in price. The Hudl user forum (www.hudluser.com) may also have some useful advice.

ezyduzzit and Jak, Web User Forums

anything different. Surely this begs the question: "why update?"

kingfisher171, Web User Forums

A Windows Update is essential to protect your computer against security flaws. Just because you rarely notice anything superficially different after completing the updates, that doesn't mean they're not important. If you still need convincing, read Make Use Of's article at bit.ly/updates359.

It can be annoying when automatic updates temporarily stop you using your PC, so why not set Windows to let you know when updates are available so you can choose a suitable time to download and install them? To do this, go to the Control Panel, select Windows Update and click 'Change settings'. By default, Windows performs all updates automatically because failing to install

them can leave your PC vulnerable to attack, so make sure you stick to a routine if you are going to perform the updates manually.

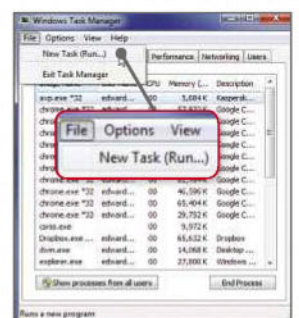
rogerman40, Web User Forums

Web User says: See our feature on page 48 for more advice about updating

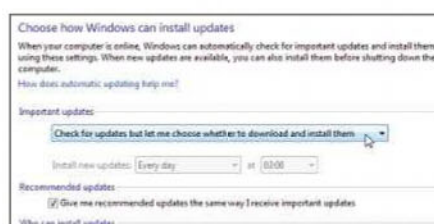
GENERAL PC

Why won't reinstalled Windows 7 run properly?

Q I just reinstalled Windows 7 and initially all seemed well. When I connected to the internet, Windows installed three updates and prompted me to restart, but when Windows launched again, it was much smaller on screen and surrounded by black; and there was no Start menu or taskbar, just a blue background with a Windows logo. I managed to right-click



If Windows Explorer won't start, try launching it from the Windows Task Manager



Make sure you put aside enough time to download and install updates manually



the screen and change the resolution so the background fills the screen, but the other problems are still there. How do I get Windows 7 back to normal please?

curlykale, Web User Forums

A It sounds like Windows Explorer isn't running. You can sometimes kick-start it using Task Manager – there are instructions at bit.ly/explorer359. Once you've got Windows Explorer running, try opening Windows Update and clicking 'View update history' to check if all your updates were successful. It could be that further updates need approval before they can be installed.

If you can't get Windows Explorer to run, your installation is probably corrupt and you should try reinstalling Windows. Sometimes upgrading a PC with a clean installation can cause problems if the older OS still exists on the recovery partition, so you could try deleting all partitions if this applies to you.

Marbles65, Web User Forums

SECURITY

What is WindApp and how do I get rid of it?

Q A program called WindApp has appeared on my PC. I don't know what it is and I can't uninstall it. Can anyone suggest how I might do this?

Cauldum, Web User Forums

A It's a PUP (Potentially Unwanted Program) that you've probably picked up when downloading some freeware. Running a scan with the free version of Malwarebytes Anti-Malware (www.malwarebytes.org – remember to untick the option for the Premium trial) should be enough to get rid of it. Once you've done that, you can also run a scan with AdwCleaner (bit.ly/adwcleaner359) or Junkware Removal Tool (thisisudax.org) to clean up any residual files.

Cantrel, Web User Forums



Malwarebytes Anti-Malware identifies and removes malware from your PC for free

VIDEO

How do I transfer video files to my iPad?

Q I've converted some videos to MP4 format so I can transfer them to my iPad, but for some reason, iTunes won't

let me. While most of the files are less than 10MB and I could technically email them to myself, I was wondering if there's a quicker way of moving them? I only need a temporary solution because this should be a one-off.

greenifan, Web User Forums

A Dropbox (www.dropbox.com) and Google Drive (drive.google.com) are both ideal for what you want, and they are both free. You can upload files to either service directly from your PC's browser, then install the corresponding iOS apps to download the videos to your tablet. You get more storage space with Google Drive (10GB) than Dropbox (2GB), but that's not going to be a deciding factor with 10MB files. The cloud is a great way to share files and you can also rest assured that your files won't be lost or stolen.

You could also have a look at the free FileMaster app (bit.ly/filemaster359) for iOS, which lets you transfer files over a Wi-Fi network and store them to your device. It's very simple to use: simply enter your iPad's IP address into your PC's browser and upload your files. Remember, if you store lots of videos on



File Master is a file manager for iOS devices that can be used with cloud services

your iPad, you will use up a lot of iCloud storage, so make sure you don't hit your limit, or your iPad won't be backed up.

izzit and ezyduzzit, Web User Forums

BROWSERS

Why is Chrome so slow?

Q I play a lot of internet games and have recently found that some pages are taking forever to load in Chrome. Any advice to help me fix this would be greatly appreciated.

bill107, Web User Forums

A I would suggest you start by emptying your browser cache. To do this in Chrome, open Settings, click 'Show advanced settings', find the Privacy section and click 'Clear browsing data'. Tick the items you want to delete, including 'Cached images and files', then select 'Clear browsing data'.



Having lots of files in your cache can slow down your browser

You mention that you play a lot of games, so you could also run Disk Cleanup and check the size of the Games Statistics Files. You could also try using Windows' troubleshooter to identify performance problems. To find it, open Control Panel, click 'Find and fix problems' and then 'Check for performance issues'.

izzit, Cantrel, Web User Forums

HARDWARE

Should I buy a laptop from Amazon USA?

Q I'm considering buying a new laptop (based on a *Web User* review) from the Amazon US. The upside is that it will save me money. Are there any downsides that I should be aware of?

ScottishHeathen, Web User Forums

A Most laptops now use a universal switched power-supply unit, so the AC adapter should work in the UK, but check the laptop's specifications because the US uses a much lower voltage. Don't forget that you will almost certainly get a US keyboard and because you are importing, you'll also



QWERTY keyboards in the USA differ in a number of ways from the UK version

be liable to duty and taxes. You can check the HMRC site (www.hmrc.gov.uk) to see how much that's likely to be.

You should also check the warranty conditions, because if the device is faulty, you'll want to be able to return it to the manufacturer within the first 12 months. If you only end up saving a small amount of money, it's probably a better idea to buy it in the UK for the peace of mind.

Cantrel, izzit and alanwood, Web User Forums

Star Email

**£25
winner**

Kickstarter project was a kick in the teeth

In August 2013, I and 4,000 other people backed a Kickstarter project called the Hot Watch (bit.ly/hotwatch359) from a company called PHTL. The project creator initially spent a lot of time hyping the product in the comments section, telling people how wonderful the watch was. As soon as the funding period ended, communication slowed, and several weeks later it stopped altogether.

Updates have come through regularly, but most have been pure fabrications, including a fake 'unboxing' video by a friend of PHTL's CEO. This was exposed by backers who discovered that the unboxer played on same cricket team as the CEO.

Delivery times and schedules have been provided since December 2013 on an almost monthly basis. However,

PHTL was only given CE certification in late April 2014, which meant they could not have begun production, nor could they claim that manufacturing and shipping would have started any sooner.

Since then, each update has claimed that PHTL is receiving watches on a weekly basis, yet none have been delivered and each update reads virtually the same. I feel like I am being lied to.

Backers (and pre-orders) have contacted PHTL over the months to be advised that they have received boxes of watches, and yet to date only around six to eight people have come forward



claiming to have received one.

PHTL is no longer taking calls from backers, instead referring them to its PR firm, who don't return calls to backers either. I feel like I have been continually misinformed and deliberately deceived, and believe that PHTL should be held accountable for its (in)actions.

At this point in time, the company needs to start offering refunds to backers or admit where the problems are and be truthful about their delays. Personally, I would just prefer a refund.

Ade Martin, via email

Lessons we can learn from Barry's holiday hell

What a revealing column by Barry Collins in Issue 357 ('Travel agents take us for a ride online')! Barry's experience shows a couple of things: firstly, how companies – especially travel companies – go to



great lengths to hide the true cost of their product in order to entice the customer to start the booking process. They know that once

you have virtually completed the booking, you are unlikely to cancel it at the last moment, even if there is a price discrepancy.

Secondly, it shows that it is much better to make a complaint on a public forum, such as Twitter or Facebook, than emailing or phoning, because there will be a much quicker response from the company. You are more likely to be ignored or receive a slow response from their main customer service department.

I look forward to reading more consumer articles in *Web User*.

Ian Post, via email

The hidden cost of splitting your train ticket

As someone who works in the rail industry, can I just clarify a couple of points that you didn't mention when reviewing MoneySavingExpert.com's Tickety Split website in Issue 357 (bit.ly/tickety357)?

Most people don't realise that it isn't the job of the booking-office clerk to suggest you split your ticket to save money; legally, they can only split the ticket if the customer requests it, not the other way around.

The main reason for this is the second bit of what was omitted from your review, and is also omitted from the site. When you purchase one direct ticket, from A to F (for example), you are covered for any delays on any leg of your journey in terms of refunds. However, split ticketing negates all that and if you have one ticket from A to B, one from C to D and another from E to F, then you can only claim a refund for the leg of the journey that is delayed. This is why rail staff won't split the ticket unless



specifically asked to. I have mentioned this to Mr Martin Lewis before, but never got a reply or an acknowledgment.

I do agree with you that rail fares are horrendous in their complexity, but once again a lot of that is misleading. A popular complaint we get is that if a single A to B costs £10 and a return costs £12, then the latter is 'ridiculous' in comparison to the price of the single. Yet, in reality, it should be £10 for a single and £20 for the return, but the terms and conditions tend to give the return portion away for very little extra. Why this confuses people, I'm not too sure.

John H Watson, Leeds

US TV shows mock our right to privacy

Has anyone noticed how, more than ever, TV shows made in Hollywood are being used as propaganda for the Obama

You can let us know your views and opinions via:
webuser@dennis.co.uk, www.facebook.com/webusermagazine,
www.twitter.com/webusermagazine and forum.webuser.co.uk



administration?

For example, in a recent episode of *NCIS Los Angeles*, the Tor network was described as being used mainly by terrorists and other unsavoury



characters, with no mention of people like us who simply object on principle to having our browsing habits

scrutinised. Also, in a recent episode of *Legends*, one of the terrorists was clearly supposed to resemble Edward Snowden.

The Obama administration has been sussed out for its manufacturing of fictional terrorist groups and plots, and is now looking ahead for the next suspect population. It appears that is likely to be internet users – if we aren't already.

John Lockett, via email

Two-year sentences are too long for trolls

After reading your story in Issue 357, 'Internet trolls face two years in jail', I can't help feeling there has been a slight overreaction from the Justice Secretary over this matter. I despise trolls as much as the next right-thinking person, and would be happy to see their cowardly, misogynistic and racist comments wiped from the web completely. But should it really be a criminal offence to send a few stupid messages to other people online, when our prisons are already overcrowded and it costs taxpayers upwards of £30,000 per year to keep a single prisoner incarcerated.

Surely there are better ways to deal with persistent and offensive trolls than simply locking them up. The TV historian Mary Beard had the right idea, when she exposed and confronted one of her persecutors, who subsequently apologised to her.

I'm not saying that trolls shouldn't be punished for their behaviour, and it could be argued that a short jail sentence is an effective deterrent, but there must be better ways to tackle this problem than placing further strain on the legal system.

Charles Elliott, via email



What you say...

YouTube is planning a paid-for, advert-free service. Do you think many people would pay for it?

Absolutely, it's a great service and I'd be happy to pay for it. I listen to music on YouTube more than any other service and it would be great to give a little back in thanks to Google.

Alastair Shortland

Some would pay to avoid watching one-minute adverts. But most people can live with the adverts you can skip after five seconds.

Chris Armstrong

So many millions rely on YouTube that many will pay if a subscription element is introduced.

Martin @MartinD56

Depends how long the ads would be. At the moment they are five seconds. Why would anyone pay a subscription to remove those?

Chris Wilkinson

Do you approve of eBay banning the resale of the poppies from the Tower of London?

Yes. The poppies were intended as a way for us to remember the war dead, not for people to make a profit.

George Dawson

If they were going to be giving the money raised from selling them to the Royal British Legion, then no problem. But if they're selling them to make money, then that's wrong.

Iain James Lewis

Yes it is disgraceful and disrespectful. It is also very annoying because a lot of people wanted to purchase them

legitimately, and they sold out very quickly.

Keith Brushett

Each poppy is a life, so people shouldn't try to make a quick pound just to make a profit.

Darren Phillips

Should Google have been fined for showing an image of a woman's cleavage on street view?

It's ridiculous! She's out in public view. Google isn't snooping in her house.

Wolf Simpson

It's ridiculous considering Google are just doing their job. It's not like they're zooming into bathrooms or anything.

Gary Lee Hussey Lo

She says it caused "depression"? What a load of nonsense. What she means is she was embarrassed and saw dollar signs.

Emmy UpTo-NoGood

Yes it's ridiculous, but I guess \$2,000 is peanuts for a company like Google.

Vallabhaneni Srikar

Are you one of the 500 million people using Facebook Messenger?

No. I stopped using it when I was told by Facebook to download a separate app on my phone. I didn't think there was any need for that.

David Muncaster

No. I won't use it until the privacy settings change so they won't spy on me.

Gabriel Da Silva

Nope. A better idea is to use ChatSecure (<https://chatsecure.org>). The permissions needed for Facebook invade your privacy.

Jack Laurence Gold @onejackgold

Yes, I use it on my iPad.

Joanne Evans

! Page 404



Barry Collins can't believe that there's still no decent way to back up a PC

Fix the back-up problem before it blows up

If you want to know what it's like being a GP for a few seconds, ask someone how often they back up their PC. You'll get the same fictional bluster that a doctor gets every time they ask a patient how many units of alcohol they drink each week.

Nobody does back-up properly. No-one. Not me, not you, and especially not the internet business with £50 million of funding that I visited a few weeks back, which was basically relying on a few scattered hard drives and the London Fire Brigade responding within 10 seconds of an office blaze to safeguard its critical data.

Why do we take such ludicrous risks with our irreplaceable photos, documents and other digital files? Because back-up is too much effort. Sure, there are decent, paid-for packages out there, but they only back up a single PC to a local hard drive. What about your laptop, which spends its entire life in front of the sofa, nowhere near an external hard drive?

Online back-up solves some of these problems, but it's slow and expensive. I recently upgraded to a fibre connection and decided to back up around 500GB of photos and documents to the online back-up service Livedrive (www.livedrive.com). Not only will this cost me the thick end of £60 for a year but it took almost a month to complete the job, and I work from home with the computer running for around 10-12 hours a day! Most people simply won't bother.

The various Windows heads at Microsoft ought to be slapped with a very large haddock for this. They've had



donkey's years and untold resources to solve the back-up problem – to make it painless and invisible to the user – but they haven't. The File History back-up system in the latest version of Windows doesn't even work with files stored on external hard drives; they have to be stored on the PC's main drive. Given

that many laptops these days come with tiny solid-state drives that hold only a fraction of most people's files, Windows back-up is about as much use

“ Windows back-up is about as much use as a tub of hair gel is to Harry Hill ”

as a tub of hair gel is to Harry Hill.

The most galling thing is that Microsoft already has the perfect set-up to offer every Windows user pretty much bulletproof back-ups. Its Office 365 online office suite provides subscribers with a whopping 1TB (1,000GB) of space to store their files via OneDrive. However, OneDrive isn't a

back-up program but a service for syncing files across multiple machines. It provides an element of back-up, but it won't protect your external hard drives, it doesn't offer a full system back-up, and you can't restore from a certain point in time (say, before a serious malware infection).

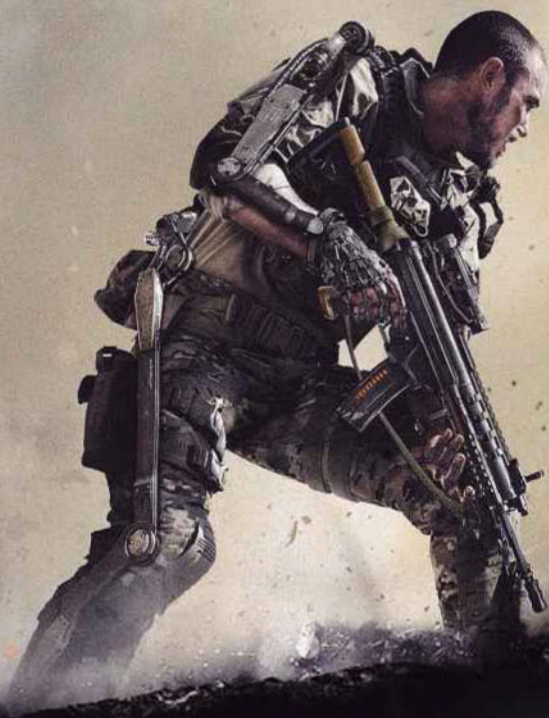
And yet there's nothing stopping Microsoft making any of this possible. Imagine if Windows 10 automatically saved incremental back-ups of all your files, both locally to back-up hard drives and into that enormous cloud? So if your computer crashed or needed to be wiped clean after being infected, you could either restore it from a back-up drive or download the necessary data from the cloud, with Windows able to return any of your PCs to a previous state from any time over the past six months.

Free, painless back-ups: doesn't that sound like a brilliant way to tempt us back to buying Windows again?

Illustration: Andrew Torrens

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